NUNAVUT HANSARD

UNEDITED TRANCRIPT

OCTOBER 28, 2026

IQALUIT, NUNAVUT

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Corrections:

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Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker
Hon. David Joanasie

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 Akeeagok
(Iqaluit-Niaqqunnguu)
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 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)

Jason Iqaluq
(Hudson Bay)

Alexander Sammurtok
(Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet)

Hon. Craig Simailak
(Baker Lake)
Minister of Comm unity 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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Iqaluit, Nunavut
October 28, 2027

Members Present:
Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok, Hon. David Akeeagok, Ms. Hanna Angootealuk, Mr. Edward Attagutaluk, Hon. George Hickes, Mr. Jason Iqaluq, Hon. David Joanasie, Mr. Jamie Kablutsiak, Mr. Gordon Kautuk, Hon. Brian Koonoo, Mr. Simon Kuliktana, Hon. Cecile Nelvana Lyal, Hon. John Main, Mr. Johnny Mike, Mr. Fred Pedersen, Mr. David Porter, Mr. Abraham Qammaniq, Hon. Craig Simailak, Mr. Steven Taqtu, Hon. Annie Tattuinee

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Joanasie)(interpretation): Item number 1. Can Mr. Simailak lead us in prayer. Mr. Simailak, please lead us in prayer.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Good afternoon MLA's and people of Nunavut. On this new day, please feel welcome in the House. Item number 2, Ministers' Statements. Government House Leader, Mr. Akeeagok.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

Minister's Statement 109-7(2): Minister Absent from the House

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say that our fellow member, Janet Brewster will be absent due to illness. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Minister's Statement 110-7(2): Recognizing Robert Kautuk for Exemplary Service in Emergency Management

Hon. Craig Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends)

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Robert Kautuk of Kangiqtugaapik, or Clyde River, a recipient of the 2026-2027 Emergency Management Exemplary Service Award.

Mr. Kautuk has been recognized in two categories: Outstanding Contribution to Emergency Management and Search and Rescue Volunteer.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Kautuk has served as a volunteer with Clyde River Search and Rescue since 2009. Over the years, he has become a trusted member of the team, supporting search operations both from the community's search and rescue centre and out on the land.

His contributions extend beyond responding when someone is missing or in distress. Mr. Kautuk uses his knowledge of the land, ice and weather, alongside tools such as InReach or SPOT devices, to help coordinate searches along with supporting responders. His work developing local weather stations and a knowledge atlas also helps hunters and travellers access information before heading out on the land.

Mr. Kautuk has worked with the Ittaq Heritage and Research Centre since 2006 and has also served as a Canadian Ranger since 2009. Across these roles, he has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to the safety and well-being of his community.

The Emergency Management Exemplary Service Award is a national honour recognizing exceptional service and achievement in emergency management. To be recognized in two categories is a remarkable acknowledgement of Mr. Kautuk's dedication and the impact of his work. His contributions span prevention and preparedness, search and rescue coordination, and response.

Mr. Speaker, search and rescue in Nunavut depends greatly on volunteers who give their time, knowledge and experience to help others. Mr. Kautuk represents that spirit of service.

Please join me in congratulating Mr. Kautuk on this well-deserved national recognition and thanking him for his many years of service to Kangiqtugaapik and Nunavut.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): We congratulate him. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Healey Akearok.

Minister's Statement 111-7(2): Food Security Coalition Collaborates with National Film Board

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

Mr. Speaker, the Nunavut Food Security Coalition collaborated with the National Film Board of Canada to produce a powerful new film that aired in Iqaluit last month. I was honoured to attend the screening of the documentary, entitled Nirilaurta: Let Us Eat.

Directed by Iqaluit's own Malaya Qaunirq Chapman, the film spotlights food insecurity and sovereignty in Taloyoak, and provides a snapshot of the food security issues affecting the lives of every single community in Nunavut, capturing our collective reality.

The film shows how the rising cost of groceries, ammunition, gear, and fuel is making harvesting increasingly difficult for Inuit. This affects more than the ability to put food on the table; it also threatens the passing of essential skills from one generation to the next within our communities. Following the screening, the Nunavut Food Security Coalition hosted an open question-and-answer session with the filmmaker, which provided everyone in attendance a meaningful space to discuss real solutions toward food sovereignty in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, challenges like food insecurity and overcrowding affect many families across our territory; this directly impacts mental and physical health, nutrition, and well-being. The Nunavut Food Security Coalition, co-chaired by the Deptartment of Family Services and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., is actively working with our partners, including Inuit organizations and community partners, to strengthen food security, deepen collaboration, and support the sale and trade of country food, and strengthen harvester programs.

Mr. Speaker, initiatives like Nirilaurta: Let Us Eat help shine the spotlight on our realities in Nunavut. Please join me in congratulating Ms. Qaunirq Chapman on her immense success with her latest film.

Qujannamik, Mr. Speaker

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. I hope everybody goes and watches that new film. Ministers' Statements. The Minister of Justice, Mr. Hickes.

Minister's Statement 112-7(2): Firearms Safety Instructor Training

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an important achievement by Firearm Safety Nunavut, coordinated through the federal government's Guns and Gangs Violence Action Fund, in expanding access to firearm safety education throughout our territory -- I realize, Mr. Speaker, this is for Mr. Mike from Pangnirtung, this minister statement might be a day late.

From September 22 to 24, 2026, Firearm Safety Nunavut, in collaboration with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's Chief Firearms Office, successfully delivered a three-day Canadian Firearms Safety Course Instructor Training program in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that all seven Nunavummiut participants successfully completed their written and practical examinations and are now certified as Non-Restricted Canadian Firearms Safety Course Instructors.

Mr. Speaker, the new instructors include three residents from Cambridge Bay, two from Taloyoak, one from Pond Inlet, and one from here in Iqaluit. Particular emphasis was placed on increasing instructor capacity within the Kitikmeot, where access to local firearm safety training has been limited.

Mr. Speaker, participants developed the skills to deliver the Canadian Firearms Safety Course and received training on equipment management, reporting requirements, firearms licensing applications, licence renewals and other administrative responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker and members, this initiative builds upon the longstanding partnership between Firearm Safety Nunavut and the Chief Firearms Office, including previous instructor-training initiatives delivered in Iqaluit and Winnipeg in 2023.

By investing in local instructors, we are building sustainable training capacity within our communities. These instructors will improve access to firearm safety education, reduce the need for travel, and help residents navigate firearms licensing requirements.

I would like to recognize Master Instructor Bob Chabot, representatives of the Chief Firearms Office, and Firearm Safety Nunavut Project Coordinator Rebecca Rowan for their contributions to this successful initiative.

Mr. Speaker, the certification of seven new instructors demonstrates our commitment to providing Nunavummiut with the knowledge and resources necessary to safely handle, transport, and store firearms while strengthening access to firearms safety training across Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Culture and Heritage, Mr. Koonoo.

Minister's Statement 113-7(2): Qilaut Winners 2026

Hon. Brian Koonoo (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with exciting news about *Qilaut.*

Qilaut is my department's annual Inuktut songwriting contest. This contest celebrates our vibrant music scene and inspires the creation of original music in Inuktut.

Mr. Speaker, this year's theme for *Qilaut* was *Avatiliriniq*. We received 21 submissions. Today, I am announcing the winners of the 2026 *Qilaut* songwriting contest. The winners are:

- 1st Jocelyn Malla from Coral Harbour with *Tukisivunga*
- 2nd Grace Metuq from Pangnirtung with *Unikkaaqtuat Ilinniinngaaqtut*
- 3rd Looee Arreak and Lorraine Akulukjuk from Iqaluit with *Qaulaarmijuq*
- 4th Kristy Kanayuk from Iqaluit with *Uumaniq*
- 5th Jocelyn Malla from Coral Harbour with *Kamatsiaqta*
- 6th Jacob and Eva Okatsiak and Eden Napayok from Arviat with *Nunami Quvianaqtuq*
- 7th Monica Qattalik from Igloolik with *Alianait*
- 8th Princess Kusugak from Rankin Inlet with *Tariuq Tautuglavut*
- 9th Letia and Rebecca Kalluk from Arctic Bay with *Ikpigilavut*
- 10th Terry Uyarak from Igloolik with *Sivulitta*

Mr. Speaker, building on the success of last year's concert tour, it was a very successful tour, my department is planning three more concerts, one in each of Nunavut's three regions. The concerts will be held in February 2027 in collaboration with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

Mr. Speaker, these concerts bring joy to our communities, gather Nunavummiut, and give the winners a stage to perform their songs. The venues and dates will be announced on the Government of Nunavut's website and social media.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the winners.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. And I know we'll be hearing music. It's great to hear. We're proud of the group. And I myself will be listening with you all. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Finance, Minister Main.

Minister’s Statement 114-7(2): RBC Banking Service Contract

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of access to appropriate banking services within our communities has been raised many times in this house.

I am pleased to announce, Mr. Speaker, that the Government of Nunavut is currently renewing its banking services agreement with Royal Bank of Canada for an additional five-year term, incorporating enhanced services in underserved communities.

This means that Royal Bank of Canada commits to conduct direct, face-to-face visits multiple times each year in communities which do not have a physical location, including Arctic Bay, Chesterfield Inlet, Clyde River, Coral Harbour, Gjoa Haven, Grise Fiord, Kimmirut, Kugaaruk, Naujaat, Qikiqtarjuaq, Resolute Bay, Sanikiluaq, Sanirajak, Taloyoak, and Whale Cove. Royal Bank of Canada will also offer online services and virtual financial literacy sessions for all Nunavummiut.

While Royal Bank of Canada continues to prioritize the attraction and retention of Inuktitut-speaking staff, language service availability currently varies and is supported through a third-party language line interpretation service.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased with this new agreement we have made with Royal Bank of Canada and our working relationship; it is great. Our commitment to providing these services to Nunavummiut remains strong.

Thankyou, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, Mr. Akeeagok.

Minister’s Statement 115-7(2): Updates for Inuit Language Programs

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as the experience and needs of Inuit continue to grow, change, and adapt, so must our language. Nunavut Arctic College is proud to support Inuit and Nunavummiut to learn through language. The College has a responsibility to ensure its language programs are relevant, up to date, and reflect the needs of the territory. I am proud to share some of the work being done to meet this responsibility through its Inuit language and culture programs.

In October, the College hosted a terminology development workshop. College representatives, local artists and Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit staff met to discuss

Inuktut terminologies for jewellery and metalwork tools and processes. That work aligns with the College's goal to increase Inuktut use and learning in the Jewellery and Metalwork program. This effort will also support the program reviews for being initiated for some Inuit language and culture programs. Program reviews allow the College to review outlines, learning outcomes, materials, and resources. A strong program structure supports strong learning in the classroom and elevates the student experience. Arctic College is committed to ensuring its programs and courses include as much Inuktut as possible.

The Artic College's Interpreter/Translator program prepares Nunavummiut to support engagement between Inuktut and English speakers, demonstrate the range and possibilities of Inuktut in conveying ideas, gather feedback, and identify needs and opportunities in Nunavut. The Artic College is proud to confirm it has recently welcomed a new Inuinnaqtun Language facilitator to support learning and development, expanding the range of programming dialects.

Finally, I would like to share that the Interpreter/Translator program has developed a new mental health medical module, made up of 5 courses, that is currently being reviewed by Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit (IUT).

I would like to ask for more time, Mr. Speaker, to finish my statement.

Speaker (interpretation): The member is asking for extending his statements. Any nays? Hearing none. Mr. Akeeagok, carry on.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you my colleagues.

This module complements the health and legal modules already embedded in this program with subject-specific terminology. The College is excited about rolling out this new module once the terminology is approved.

Mr. Speaker, the College recognizes there is a network of organizations working to support Inuktut language and the College is proud to be a part of this network. As a designated post-secondary institute in Nunavut, the College remains committed to supporting high-quality Inuktut language learning in the territory.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. I would like to express our pride in our interpreters here at the House, and others, to ensure we conduct our business in a language we can understand. And we further encourage students, especially those in interpreter translator program. Moving on, Members' Statements. Iqaluit-Niaqunnguu MLA, Mr. Akeeagok.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 125-7(2): Reflecting on Becoming Member for Niaqunnguu

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think we all remember last year and late evening at 2 o'clock that I was elected. It was at my anniversary yesterday, and it was at 2 o'clock we were told we (indiscernible); I was asleep. But it's already a year. A year has lapsed. And I'm always grateful to my constituents and the issues and the platform. I have not forgotten.

And this past year I'm not at work, I haven't been at work full-time but I am back, and my staff are constantly available. Do pay them a visit. Do pay me a visit.

The issues I ran for are still very real today, and for that I encourage that you visit me and those who are also elected, all of us had to face the news that late hour. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. I hear laughs already. Item 3, Members' Statements. High Arctic MLA, Mr. Taqtu.

Member's Statement 126-7(2): Suicide Prevention

Mr. Taqtu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did mention it previously, and I will emphasize or stress concerning Nunavut and the younger generation are around 21,100 individuals. And it seems to be sad that there are more increase in suicides. And there are supports out there, yes. Perhaps we can showcase that problem more here in the legislature and elsewhere. (interpretation ends).

Nunavut is 110 per 100,000. That's five to 10 times higher than the national average and 500 to 842 per 100,000, which is among the highest rates for any specific geographic group globally.

(interpretation) Looking at this, it's very unpleasant, and we need to emphasize it more, the problem of suicide among our youth. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. And like you said, let us express the community concerns. Members' Statements. Cambridge Bay MLA, Mr. Pedersen.

Member's Statement 127-7(2): Nunavut Housing Corporations Homeowner Programs (Pedersen)

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to those watching our proceedings back home in Cambridge Bay. With my statement today, I'm giving notice to the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation that I will be asking her questions on the Corporation's homeowner programs.

Mr. Speaker, we are aware that in recent years, the cost associated with constructing homes and of buying new or renovated homes has increased to the point of making home ownership very difficult for most of our residents.

Existing homeowners and prospective homeowners need programs available to them that takes this reality into account. Otherwise, the idea of families becoming owners of their own homes in Nunavut will remain an unattainable dream, and only the most affluent families in Nunavut will be able to realize this dream.

Due to this, the Housing Corporation needs to ensure that its programs reflect the realities we face in Nunavut today and into the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Qammaniq.

Member's Statement 128-7(2): Correspondence Received from the Prime Minister

Mr. Qammaniq (interpretation): Thank you, I am quite late. I've been late for a whole week due to weather.

Mr. Speaker, I had written a letter to the Prime Minister and he responded. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I am pleased to table a copy of correspondence that I recently received from the Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, which is in reply to my letter concerning Search and Rescue infrastructure in the Arctic. I encourage all members to review the document with care.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and here's a copy of the letter that you will be receiving. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. When we go to item number 13, you can table that document. We're on item number 3. Members' Statements. Members' Statements and following my list of names: Member for Pangnirtung, Mr. Mike.

Member's Statement 129-7(2): Land Use Plan

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

Mr. Speaker, I have a statement to make. Quite a lot of us were involved in the negotiations for the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. There were four of us who travelled around during the negotiation process, and there's only very few of us left that were involved in the negotiations. We still have from Qikiqtarjuaq, Johnny Kooneelusie, and I believe there's others who were involved during that process. And today we don't hear very much about the Agreement.

I remember at that time there were four of us negotiators, and during that time we worked very hard and usually had long hours way into the night on behalf of the people of Nunavut to make it easier for the people. And I know that there's a lot of people who are not talking about the agreement. And usually I have comments about the negotiations, and it's something that is very important to us.

At the appropriate time I will be directing my questions to the Premier about the Land Use Plan and the importance of it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Tununiq, Mr. Koonoo.

Member's Statement 130-7(2): Water Issues in Pond Inlet

Hon. Brian Koonoo (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon people of Nunavut.

A couple of days ago about the flooding in Pond Inlet, and that damaged the water supply that we have for the community. And I hear that it's not adequate for drinking. The ice is starting to form, and I would like the people of Pond Inlet to know that Community Services will be giving further information about the water supply, and this spring we will be doing our remediating so that we have safe ample water supply. Usually every year we get ice for drinking water in my community from the iceberg.

Speaker (interpretation): Members' Statements. And going back to the *Orders of the Day*, Item number 4, Returns to Oral Questions. Mr. Simailak.

Item 4: Returns to Oral Questions

Return to Oral Question 157-7(2): Insurance for Municipal Infrastructure

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to follow up on an answer I gave the member from Aggu regarding the status of the Nunavut Fire Marshal's Office investigation into the Kipsigak arena fire.

Mr. Speaker, department officials have confirmed that the investigation has concluded, and the cause of the fire has been classified as undetermined. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Item Number 5, Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Ms. Healey Akearok

Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.(interpretation ends) I'm so happy to rise today to recognize a woman we all love and respect dearly, my fellow Iqalummiuq, Ms. Malaya Qaunirq Chapman.

Mr. Speaker, as I noted earlier, the Nunavut Food Security Coalition collaborated with the National Film Board of Canada to produce Ms. Qaunirq Chapman's latest film, *Nirilaurta: Let Us Eat.* Initiatives like this film help shine the spotlight on our realities in Nunavut.

And hot off the presses, Mr. Speaker, this film has just won the Mark Haslam Award at the Planet In Focus Film Festival as of yesterday, I believe.

>>Applause.

Mr. Speaker, this is Ms. Qaunirq Chapman's 13th year in film. She has made two movies from start to finish. She has acted in five films and TV shows, and has hosted four television programs. She's always exploring and forever chasing the next film project to advocate for Inuit.

Her advocacy work is always focused on keeping Inuit culture strong, reclaiming language, hunting, food processing and family. She describes herself as extremely food motivated. And joining Ms. Qaunirq Chapman in the House today is her aunt, Amanda Qaunirq.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to please join me in congratulating Ms. Qaunirq Chapman on immense success with her latest film, and welcome to your House.(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, and welcome to your House, Ms. Qaunirq Chapman. I think I saw you on North of North.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery, Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Iqaluq.

Mr. Iqaluq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize an individual who's visiting us in the House from my community of Sanikiluaq. As a student from Public Service Alliance, Alice Mikiyuk. She was recently promoted to tenant relations officer. She's also my former classmate. I'm glad she's here for this recognition of the House, and I welcome for her to be in here as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Please welcome to the House. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunnguu Mr. Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to also recognize Malaya Qaunirq Chapman for her dedication in all the work that she's done, and also my old neighbour, Amanda. You might have known yesterday when my colleague was in the Committee of the Whole, her daughter was in the hot seat, and she was able to provide all the relevant information that she was able to pass the capital for her. It is all her upbringing. So very powerful youth that have come up the system, so I wanted to recognize them. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Please welcome once again. And please feel welcome. I would like to invite the people of Nunavut to come see the House when they are in town. Item number 6, Oral Questions. Member for Uqqummiut, Mr. Kautuk.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Oral Question 167-7(2): Fisheries Sector

Mr. Kautuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends)

My questions today are for the Minister of Community Services, whose department is responsible for fisheries and sealing.

Mr. Speaker, I recently received correspondence from the office of Clyde River's Hunters and Trappers Association.

The correspondence indicated that, "Clyde River has recently experienced encouraging success through an exploratory fishery targeting turbot and Arctic char. The results have demonstrated the potential for a viable and sustainable local fishery capable of supporting long-term economic development in the region."

As the Minister will recall, his department's Fisheries and Sealing Strategic Plan was tabled in the Legislative Assembly in November of 2023, just under three years ago.

Can the Minister describe how his department is working to support the development of exploratory fisheries?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minster Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you member for his question regarding fisheries. And I did hear about Clyde River trying to get into the commercial fisheries and it's exciting. It expands more fisheries into the territory. Commercial fisheries does support economic diversification, food security and local employment. Just in the year 2025 alone, Nunavut fisheries generated $148 million in harvest value, which is very exciting for Nunavummiut.

And to his question, we've continued to invest in growing its fisheries, and this year alone we are investing $525,000 in the Fisheries Development and Diversification Program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kautuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The correspondence that I received indicates that, "The establishment of an inshore fish processing facility would enable Clyde River to retain more of the benefits generated from its fisheries while creating meaningful employment opportunities for residents."

Can the Minister describe how his department can work with the Clyde River Hunters and Trappers Association to identify sources of capital funding for this initiative?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I thank the member for his question on the idea of expanding fisheries in Clyde River. We would be willing to work with the Hunters and Trappers Association of Clyde River to figure out what their goals are, what they want to do with the actual fisheries in their area, and we could look at what funding programs might be available, and it would also help our department to see what other types of funding we would like to secure or advocate for from the federal government.

So if the Hunters and Trappers Association does reach out to us through you or by themselves, we would be willing to work with them and see how we can help them out going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kautuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you Minister, for the response.

The Minister of Community Services is also responsible for the Nunavut Development Corporation.

As the Minister is aware, the Nunavut Development Corporation has a number of subsidiaries in the meat and fish sector, including Kivalliq Arctic Foods, Kitikmeot Foods and Papiruq Fisheries. The corporation also has an investment in the Arctic Fisheries Alliance.

Can the Minister indicate what direction has been given to the Nunavut Development Corporation to establish new subsidiaries, including fish processing plants in communities like Clyde River?

Speaker: Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I thank the member for his question regarding the Nunavut Development Corporation.

I believe the board has been working diligently to see -- the Nunavut Development Corporation board has been working diligently to see where and how we can make some more improvements across the territory with any of their subsidiaries, to help spur economic opportunities or activities in the territory. Everything is pretty much on the table; wherever they can help out, they will look at it and see what they can do with it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Oral Questions. Member for Aivilik, Ms. Angootealuk.

Oral Question 168-7(2): Seniors Initiatives

Ms. Angootealuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my questions to the Minister responsible for Seniors; I'm not sure which one. Perhaps Minister Main will respond to my question. (interpretation ends)

As the Minister will recall, I have raised many concerns about the Elders' mobility vans that the previous government funded for a number of communities, including Coral Harbour.

As the Minister is aware, his department's current business plan indicates that one of its priorities is to "develop an accessible transportation program" for Elders and seniors.

Mr. Speaker, (interpretation) our new colleague from Sanikiluaq recently raised the issue of transporting Elders to their medical appointments. (interpretation ends)

Can the Minister provide an update today on his department's work to get the Elders' vans on the road?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To respond to your question, I'll respond to the question first, Mr. Speaker.

We are pleased during our spring session we request funding for $1.25 million for Transportation. It's to be geared towards use of the vehicles. And once the funding requested was approved, so we initiated the policy, drafting up the policy, and that the funding be directed to entities that will operate the Elder vans.

I know there's impatience growing in the community, and we understand the impatience, and they're getting tired of waiting for the Elder vans, and we know and we're aware of that. So we're now working on the policies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your first supplementary question, Ms. Angootealuk.

Ms. Angootealuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends)

Can the Minister indicate when the government will expand the Elders' mobility van initiative to include other communities, including Naujaat?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) At this point, I can't indicate when we would look at expanding. Our focus right now is on getting the existing vans...we're getting this new operational money flowing. But we know that there's a demand or a desire to see accessible transportation services available right across Nunavut. And it's not just about seniors. It's also about Nunavummiut who have mobility challenges, no matter what age they are.

And so we do see as a government a lot of potential benefit to Nunavummiut from this initiative. However, we don't want to get ahead of ourselves. We want to proceed in a step-wise fashion, where once we have a mechanism and a policy for these operational monies to flow out and it's running in a way that it should, then we can look at expanding it. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Angootealuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you Premier for your response. (interpretation ends)

As the Minister will recall, the Legislative Assembly approved his department's 2026-2027 main estimates during our recent spring sitting.

The department’s budget includes funding for its Elders Secretariat. This division has four positions.

Can the Minister indicate how many of the positions in the secretariat have been filled?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Responsible for Seniors, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Unfortunately right now all four of those positions are vacant, and it has been impacting our department's work on seniors or Elders' related files, including the accessible transportation initiatives.

So we are looking at all options in terms of how we can see positions filled, to see the important work happen. The seniors' file touches on many different aspects or many different departments within the government, whether it's Housing, whether it's Health, whether it's Family Services. And so, it is a cross-cutting portfolio, and we see that secretariat role as being a key one.

But we need those positions staffed. We need this work getting done. We really appreciate Community Services is contributing to our partnering with us towards development of that accessible transportation policy that I mentioned earlier, and look forward to seeing that work move forward.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Item number 6, Oral Questions. Member for Pangnirtung, Mr. Mike.

Oral Question 169-7(2): Fisheries Sector

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to the people of Nunavut. I have a question today for the Minister of Community Services, whose department is responsible for fisheries and sealing.

As the Minister will recall, I have raised many concerns in the Legislative Assembly about the issue of fishing quotas; I will be talking about actual quota.

But first of all, I would like to thank the Minister for his recent letter to me on this subject, which I tabled yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister's letter indicated that, "Nunavut must continue to seek greater access to fisheries resources in waters adjacent to our territory and ensure Nunavummiut receive greater economic benefits from these resources." (interpretation ends)

Can the Minister update the House today on his most recent discussions with the federal government on this issue? I'm fishing for answers. Thank you.

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

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I hope the member will catch a nice big fish with his fishing questions here.

Regarding advocacy to the federal government on offshore fisheries or fisheries in general for Nunavut entities, Nunavummiut who are constantly advocating, reaching out to Department of Federal Fisheries and Oceans Canada, advocating the need for more quotas for Nunavut, it provides sustainable economic opportunities for Nunavummiut. It's a stable, supportive fisheries section that we can get into. So, we are constantly meeting with the, reaching out to the federal minister of Oceans Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Minister for your explanation. (interpretation ends)

Information published by the Minister's department indicates that, "Efforts are ongoing to advocate for federal financial support to facilitate the repatriation and acquisition of fishing quotas."

(interpretation) This term we're talking about OB Zone turbot fishing area, the Nunavut residents get very small amount of this quota system and usually the larger portion goes outside of Nunavut entities.

When I raised this issue earlier this year, the Minister indicated that the cost would be in the "high tens to hundreds of millions of dollars." (interpretation ends)

Can the Minister indicate today what progress has been in this area?

Speaker: Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The advocacy continues with the federal government. It's not only myself; our Premier himself met with the federal minister earlier this year, and this was one of the items that he brought up with her.

We're also working with the Inuit organizations together as a joint advocacy, telling our story for Nunavummiut that commercial fisheries should become 100 percent adjacency waters for us. They are adjacent to Nunavut, so it should be given 100 percent to Nunavummiut. So that's why we are at. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Minister. (interpretation ends)

Recent news reports indicate that the 2027 "Our Ocean" conference will take place next May in Halifax.

Senior federal officials have been in Iqaluit this week to meet with stakeholders.

Can the Minister indicate how the Government of Nunavut will be participating in this event?

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): The Minister of Community Services and responsible for fisheries, Mr. Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. People spoke with -- Nunavummiut spoke with some of those people down there. One example is Diana Fox Carney. We have been working with anyone and telling anyone that will listen that we need 100 percent quota with our adjacency waters for Nunavummiut. So we've been working with anyone and advocating with everyone that is involved with that going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 170-7(2): Activities of Quilliq Energy Corporation

Mr. Qammaniq: Thank you, Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation.

I would like to follow up today on a number of issues that I raised during our spring sitting.

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.

As the Minister is also aware, Sanirajak's power plant was built decades ago.

During the Legislative Assembly's sitting of May 27, 2026, the Minister informed the House that the report on the Sanirajak assessment was expected to be completed in mid-August.

Mr. Speaker, it is now October.

Can the Minister highlight the main findings of the assessment and will she 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): 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 know that the power plant in Sanirajak was constructed in 1971, and it's on the top of our list of eight power plants; there's our top eight that are being assessed. And so the last site visit was conducted in the spring. The power plant site visit in Sanirajak took place in March-April of 2026, and all of the rest of the site visits were completed over the summer.

And so the completion of the assessment report is ongoing, and so we haven't received that yet, but when we do, we'll be sharing the information available when we receive it. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Qammaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends)

The Qulliq Energy Corporation recently issued a Request for Proposals for the design and installation of a new emergency generator at Sanirajak's power plant.

This is an important action to address the need for reliable power generation in the community.

Can the Minister confirm what the Qulliq Energy Corporation's long-terms plans are with respect to constructing a new power plant for the community and expanding the use of renewable energy?

Qujannamiik.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Healey Akearok.

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

As I stated earlier, the Sanirajak power plant is definitely on our radar as one of our older plants that's at the end of its lifecycle. Our approach to new construction, new power plants, is focused on scaleable, modular, hybrid power plants, to the member's question related to renewable energy.

This approach to new construction for our power plants is meant to set communities up for success for integrating their own renewable energy projects.

Those projects can be supported through what's called the "Independent Power Producer Program." And so, you know, looking at the big picture of how we set our communities up for successful energy projects across the territory, we want to make sure our

infrastructure is ready for that and then that we have programs that community organizations or hamlet's or Inuit organizations can access that help communities build their own renewable energy projects. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Qammaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) A number of my colleagues have been asking questions about the Qulliq Energy Corporation's request that the Government of Canada "take over" the corporation's historical debt.

This issue came up during our televised hearing on the territorial public accounts with the Office of the Auditor General of Canada.

My question to the Minister is this: has the Government of Canada said "yes" to the request or has the Government of Canada said "no" to the request?

Qujannamiik.

Speaker (interpretation): 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 that follow-up question.

Our conversations with the Government of Canada with our colleagues across multiple departments continues. I have sent letters again as recently as a week ago. So we haven't had a definitive answer yet, and our conversations and our advocacy on behalf of Nunavut continues to happen. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Oral Questions. Member for Cambridge Bay, Mr. Pedersen.

Oral Question 171-7(2): Nunavut Housing Corporations Homeowner Programs

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my questions are directed to the Minister responsible for Housing Corporation, and are on the top of the homeowner programs.

The Corporation and this government encourage Nunavummiut to become homeowners; this is one way to reduce demand on public housing. Another way is offering staff housing, and we are aware that there is a shortage of staff housing, not only for this government, but for other employers in Nunavut as well.

Mr. Speaker, it could be said that we are in a housing crisis in Nunavut. As the Minister is aware, the programs that the Housing Corporation offers have income thresholds, and

those thresholds are set fairly low. This excludes many households from being able to apply to those programs.

Having low income thresholds is a barrier to homeowners at a time when we as a government are promoting home ownership. The community-specific limits are calculated by the estimated cost of constructing a modest 1,000 square foot house in the community, along with ongoing monthly housing expenditures.

For my community of Cambridge Bay, the maximum income threshold is presently set at $200,929.

My first question to the Minister is: How often are these rates reviewed to ensure that they are keeping up to the rising housing costs in our communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister responsible for the Energy Corporation, Ms. Lyall.

Hon. Cecile Lyall: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for the question. Since the introduction of our new suite of programs, there has not been a review of the income threshold, so eligibility requirements. We did receive quite a bit of correspondence from the member and constituents across Nunavut, and we're continuously looking at how we can make improvements to the programs that we offer to ensure as many Nunavummiut as possible are able to remain in the homes that they own, while also balancing our limited funds to do so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Corporation's Home Renovation Program which can assist homeowners with major repairs and/or renovations to the home they live in also has funding limits geared to household incomes.

This program provides rebates or funding after the homeowner has already completed the repairs or renovations and has paid for them. Forgivable amounts range from $100,000 for a family earning less than $125,000 a year, to $20,000 for a family earning more than the AISH, or the average income required for home ownership.

One would expect that in any one of our communities, a family that has household income of $125,000 or less is likely not to be a homeowner, but rather, they are more likely to be a public housing tenant.

So my second question is: How often are these rates set. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Lyall.

Hon. Cecile Lyall: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for the question. The average income required for home ownership is updated annually. At NHC, with our senior executive team, we are in the process of reviewing a number of our different programs in home ownership and our different suite of programs offered through Igluliuqatigiingniq.

We are hoping to have updated numbers on this within the next fiscal year, not specifically the home renovation program and a number of other programs we offer at NHC. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for your responses. The minister is aware through the corporations own increasing costs in providing both public housing and staff housing throughout Nunavut that costs of construction have risen dramatically in recent years. I'm resale cost of homes in our communities to the extent that it is becoming unaffordable for families to become homeowners. Present pricing is geared more to large corporations and housing rental companies. A good example of this is an approximately 900 squire foot two bedroom House in Iqaluit with a price being listed at $849,000. Mortgage costs alone for that House would be in the range of over $5,000 per month and this does not include utilities, insurance and taxes. Based on a scale of using 30 percent of income per housing related costs the homeowner would require household income after taxes of more than $15,000 a month. This really limits who can become a homeowner in Nunavut.

My final question, Mr. Speaker, is will the Minister consider removing income thresholds for homeowner programs so that all homeowners and potential homeowners can become eligible for the programs offered by the Nunavut Housing Corporation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister of Housing, Ms. Lyall.

Hon. Cecile Lyall: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for the question. Currently the redesigned Nunavut Down-Payment Assistance Program does not have maximum eligibility requirements, but as the member stated, the amount that goes into -- it is categorized through income levels.

We are in the process of reviewing the income levels within these programs, while also working with different organizations that might also being offering home ownership programs to Nunavummiut or to Nunavut Inuit, and ensuring that our programs have the ability to be matched with other programs.

So these conversations are preliminary but they are ongoing, and we're hoping to have new outlines of these programs in the next fiscal year, as we continue to review the implications of the current parameters and ensuring that we're meeting the needs of as many Nunavummiut as we can. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Oral Questions. Aggu MLA, Mr. Attagutaluk.

Oral Question 172-7(2): Activities of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission

Mr. Attagutaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker (interpretation ends) My questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission.

As the Minister will recall, she recently tabled the latest annual reports from the Office of the Workers' Advisor.

This is an arms-length – not my arm, but my arm is too short -- that has the responsibility to assist workers in both Nunavut and the Northwest Territories with their injury claims and related matters.

Mr. Speaker, the Advisor's most recent annual report indicates that, "While the office has continued to meet its obligations, the current workload and breadth of duties are stretching available resources and are not sustainable under the present staffing structure. From an administrative perspective, I believe it would make sense to establish a second office in Nunavut."

Can the Minister indicate if the Government of Nunavut supports this recommendation?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for Workers' Compensation Commission, Minister Tattuinee.

Hon. Annie Tattuinee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. I had an opportunity earlier this year to actually visit the Office of the Worker, and we did have a discussion about the need for additional resources based on the recent reports that were tabled in this sitting.

That discussion requires me to have a conversation with the government of the Northwest Territories responsible for Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission. That conversation hasn't taken place yet. And as these reports were tabled, it will be a

conversation that I hope to have within the fiscal year. Thank you for your question, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): First supplementary to your question, Mr. Attagutaluk.

Mr. Attagutaluk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the response. As the Minister is aware, amendments to the Northwest Territories Workers' Compensation Act were passed into law earlier this year.

These concerned presumptive coverage for firefighters and first responders.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to volunteer firefighters in Igloolik and all Nunavut communities.

Can the Minister confirm when she will be introducing a Bill into our Legislative Assembly to amend the Nunavut Workers' Compensation Act in the same way?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Tattuinee.

Hon. Annie Tattuinee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Consultations with stakeholders are taking place beginning of November with the hiring of the individual that will be replacing the outgoing president, Rick Hunt. He will be participating in the consultation over that transition period.

We hope to have the responses taken into consideration, and if we're going to match or mirror the decisions made by the government of the Northwest Territories, we hope to get that in place for January 1, 2028. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Attagutaluk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the Minister will recall, she recently tabled a copy of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission's 2026 corporate plan.

As a former member of the Nunavut Employees Union, I am very much aware of the importance of workplace health and safety.

Can the Minister highlight some of the major initiatives that the Commission is currently working on to enhance workplace health and safety in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister responsible for Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission, Ms. Tattuinee.

Hon. Annie Tattuinee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. I unfortunately don't have the response readily available, but I would like to get back to the member with his question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 173-7(2): Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Link

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, and they concern the status of the Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Link project.

As the Minister will recall, the governments of Nunavut and Manitoba recently signed a new Memorandum of Understanding in July of this year.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Manitoba Premier for taking the time to travel to Arviat for the signing. I know that he received a very warm welcome
.
Mr. Speaker, the announcement concerning the memorandum of understanding made specific reference to the Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Link project.

This built on the previous declaration that committed both governments to supporting a “strategic economic and energy corridor between Manitoba and Nunavut.”

Can the Minister provide an update today on the implementation of the memorandum of understanding with Manitoba as it specifically relates to the Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Link project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleague for the question. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for helping to welcome Premier Kinew into Nunavut last summer. It was a historic sitting. I don't believe we've ever had a sitting of Manitoba premier visit our shared home community, and it was an important moment not just for Arviat, but for the Kivalliq and for Nunavut.

In terms of the Memorandum of Understanding, there are a number of different components within that memorandum. Officials have met from Nunavut government and the Manitoba government. There's a number of shared interest files that, you know, as a neighbouring jurisdiction that we have with them, and I really can't overstate the

importance of the support for Manitoba's side for the future of the Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Link.

I was fortunate to be present under our former Premier Akeeagok when he was together with Premier Kinew in Winnipeg when Manitoba signalled their commitment to provide power for the project, and that was a major milestone for the Hydro-Fibre Link, and the work continues to secure the backing and to secure the support to see the project proceed towards approval and construction. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister is aware, the Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Link project has been identified as one of four “projects of national interest” that are being developed in Nunavut.

The other projects are the Grays Bay Road and Port project in the Kitikmeot, new marine infrastructure in Qikiqtarjauq and new hydroelectric power infrastructure near the capital.

Can the Minister provide an update today on how the Government of Nunavut is working with the Nukik Corporation to secure federal funding for the project?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, (interpretation ends) and thank the member for highlighting the fact that the Nunavut government is not the proponent for this project. However, we are an important stakeholder and a supporter.

In terms of the Hydro-Fiber Link, I note that they are currently going through their permitting towards a Land Use Plan amendment, and so I think that again is showing progress and showing that they are moving closer towards their goal.

Lobbying federal agencies has been ongoing. At the Investment Summit in Toronto recently, I was to attend an event along Vice-President Paul Irngaut from Nunavut Tunngavik, where we took the opportunity to highlight the investment potential of Inuit-led projects, including the Hydro-Fiber Link.

Whether it's the National Electricity Strategy, whether it's the work towards One Canadian Economy, or whether it's towards Arctic Security and Sovereignty, the Hydro-Fiber Link is a project that would contribute. And so we're seeing alignment with many of the federal government's goals, and so that's a positive that we are seeing in our discussions today. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kablutsiak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My apologies; to rephrase, Grays Bay is in Kitikmeot. (interpretation ends)

As the Minister is aware, the Nunavut Planning Commission has been considering proposed amendments to the Keewatin Regional Land Use Plan.

It is my understanding that these amendments are necessary for the Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Link project to move forward.

In recent months, certain transboundary groups have been making motions and using other procedural tools in respect to the process.

Documents that are on the public record indicate that they are now threatening to seek judicial review of "any decision or process that affects their rights and interests."

Can the Minister indicate what the Government of Nunavut's position is respecting the actions of the transboundary groups?
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) First off, we respect the processes that are set out in the Nunavut Agreement and the institutes of public government, including the Nunavut Planning Commission. So within that process, we do engage in good faith and we respect the rights of other stakeholders to engage in good faith.

The development can be contentious. It's very difficult to come to a position where everybody agrees, and that's where the role of the Planning Commission is so important, the role of the Commissioners is so important, to take a wide range of views and to come to a good decision.

And so we continue to have faith in the process, and if the member is wanting more detail around the specific positions that have been taken, I can certainly follow up with the member outside of the House. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 174-7(2): RBC Banking Services

Mr. Kuliktana: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Finance. Today the government of Nunavut announced that had it had renewed the banking service agreement with the Royal Bank of Canada for the next five years, including improving incorporating enhanced services in the underserved communities.

What are the government's plans to the communities that were not mentioned in regards to the under served communities that do not have major banks available to them? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) And I thank the member for following up on the statement today.

So what the department did is we know that Nunavummiut want access to banking services. We know it's something that helps them in their daily lives, whether it's saving up for a new skidoo or planning for the future. And so we look at 25 communities in Nunavut, and then we look at what availability communities have and where the gaps are.

So there's a range of communities that are served either by Royal Bank of Canada, by CIBC -- apologies to the interpreter, I can't remember what that stands for -- and First Nations Bank.

And so the statement today and the extension, five-year extension, we've secured the face-to-face visits multiple times a year for communities that do not have a physical branch location from either First Nations Bank, CIBC or Royal Bank of Canada. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Kugluktuk was one of the communities not mentioned to be part of enhanced services in under serviced services provided by Royal Bank every Canada. Kugluktuk has a First Nations Bank, but it is not considered a major bank and always been inconsistent of being open to our community. So will be minister commit in including Kugluktuk to receive enhanced services and be included in the under served communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I appreciate the member sharing his concerns around that. Like I mentioned earlier, it is an important service for Nunavummiut to have access to in terms of banking. So other communities that we did not include in this commitment are Baker Lake and Pond Inlet.

And I think the shorthand is we didn't want to step on anybody's toes, or in terms of First Nations Bank and their interests in Nunavut communities. But I can certainly take the member's suggestion or request, take it back to the department and see what we can do. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kuliktana: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister. Will the minister commit and ensure to provide banking essential services in the future to the communities that don't have major banks and were not mentioned in the under served communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. John Main: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I can certainly take that suggestion from the member. I'm not going to commit to that today. I don't think it would be appropriate for me to commit, because the announcement today was part of a contract, a five-year contract that's been secured, and so I'm not able to amend that on the fly here in the House.

But I can say that I will take the member's concerns around banking services in his community back to the department, and then we can discuss with officials what options may exist to help Kugluktuk residents access the services they need.

We know that banking services are a benefit to Nunavut residents. They are a key service that helps them to live more independent lives. And so that's something that we do take very seriously. (interpretation) thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Oral Questions. I have no more names on my list. Going back to the *Orders of the Day*, Item number 7, Written Questions. Item number 8, Returns to Written Questions. Item 9, Replies to Opening Address. Item number 10, Petitions. Item 11, Responses to Petitions. Item 12, Reports of Standing and Special Committees and Bills and Other Matters. Item 13, Tabling of Documents.

Member for Amittuq, Mr. Qammaniq.

Item 13: Tabling of Documents

Tabled Document 66-7(2): Correspondence from the Office of the Prime Minister of Canada Concerning Search and Rescue Infrastructure

Mr. Qammaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I am pleased to table a copy of correspondence that I recently received from the Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, which was in reply to my letter concerning Search and Rescue infrastructure in the Arctic. I encourage all members to review the document with care. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Tabling of Documents. Item number 14, Notices of Motions. Item 15, Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Item 16, Motions. Item 17, First Reading of Bills. Item 18, Second Reading of Bills. Item 19, Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters, Bills 10, 11 and 12 with Mr. Pedersen in the Chair. But before we move to Committee of the Whole, we will take a 10-minute break. Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>House breaks at 15:10; Committee commences at 15:33

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

Chairman (Pedersen): Good afternoon. I call the Committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole today, we have the following items to deal with: Bills 10, 11 and 12. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Taqtu.

Mr. Taqtu: Thank you, Chair. We wish to continue with the consideration of Bill 10, *Appropriation (Capital) Act, 2027-2028*, and the proposed 2027-2028 Capital Estimates of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Taqtu. Are we in agreement we first deal with Bill 10, *Appropriation (Capital) Act, 2027-2028?*

Some Members: Agreed.

Bill 10 - Appropriation (Capital) Act, 2027 2028 – Consideration in Committee

Chairman: Thank you. I would like to ask Minister Hickes, do you have any officials you would like to have appear before the Committee?

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you. With the Committee's indulgence, yes, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. 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 Hickes, please introduce your officials and proceed with your Opening Comments.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members.

It is my pleasure to join you today to review the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut's capital estimates for 2027-2028, as part of the proposed five-year capital plan covering the 2027-2032 period.

Joining me here today is Mr. Eiryn Devereaux, Deputy Minister, Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut and to my left, your right, Mr. Chairman, Mr. John Hawkins, Assistant Deputy Minister, Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut.

Mr. Chair, the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut plays a vital role in supporting all Government of Nunavut departments and agencies. The department delivers key central services, which include procurement, infrastructure management, information management and technology, petroleum products management, and transportation. These services enable Government of Nunavut staff to remain connected, ensure that Government of Nunavut facilities are safe and suitable, and guarantee the availability of essential goods across the territory.

Mr. Chairman and members, for the 2027-2028 fiscal year, the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure is proposing a total capital appropriation of $53,053,000. These projects and initiatives are focused on three priority areas:

- Government of Nunavut-owned water and waste infrastructure
- Strengthening Transportation-focused Infrastructure and Assets, and
- Enhancing Service Capacity

Mr. Chair, as our communities grow, so does the demand on aging infrastructure. As part of my department's 2027-2028 capital estimates, we are proposing the following investments in Government of Nunavut-owned water and wastewater infrastructure in Rankin Inlet and Resolute Bay:

- $250,000 toward Wastewater Treatment in Resolute Bay, and

- $5,000,000 toward the replacement of critical undersized and overloaded water and sewer mains in Rankin Inlet

Combined, these initiatives represent an investment of $5,250,000, or 10% of my department's proposed capital investment. These investments are vital to enhancing the quality of life for Nunavummiut in Rankin Inlet by ensuring the Government of Nunavut-owned water and wastewater treatment assets can accommodate current and future community needs.

Mr. Chairman and members, air transportation is a critical part of living in the territory, and my department continues to advance projects to improve access to communities, address aging infrastructure, and to improve air services for Nunavummiut across the territory. As part of the 2027-2028 Capital Estimates, my department is proposing the following investments into transportation-focused initiatives:

- $11,555,000 toward the Rankin Inlet Air Major Runway Resurfacing
- $2,600,000 toward mobile equipment shelters in Kugluktuk, Pond Inlet and Arviat
- $2,000,000 toward an Airport Fence in Pangnirtung
- $800,000 to the new Rankin Inlet Air Terminal
- $2,338,000 toward Iqaluit International Airport improvement
- $500,000 toward Marine Infrastructure
- $2,500,000 toward Airport Lifecycle – Transportation Equipment and Facilities
- $1,000,000 toward the Runway Maintenance and Improvement Fund

Mr. Chairman and members, the combined investments in transportation-focused infrastructure total $23,293,000 or 44% of my department's capital appropriation for 2027-2028. These projects advance improvements to air terminal facilities, enhance the quality and reliability of air travel for Nunavummiut, provide critical storage for airport equipment, address runways requiring rehabilitation and allocate funding for community marine infrastructure.

Mr. Chairman and members, as part of my department's 2027-2028 capital estimates, we are proposing investments to maintain and enhance our capacity to deliver service to departments, communities and citizens across the territory.

Mr. Chair, these initiatives combined represent a total proposed capital investment of $24,510,000, a total of 46% of my department's 2027-2028 proposed capital appropriation.

Mr. Chair, in 2027-2028, my department is proposing the following capital investments to support ongoing enhancements to service delivery:

- $2,500,000 toward planning the Government of Nunavut Capital Projects, recognizing that the development of capital projects requires detailed research and long-term planning.

- $8,700,000 in 2027-2028 toward Minor Capital Projects managed by the department in the following areas:
    - Building and Equipment Upgrades - a total of $5,000,000 toward upgrades and repairs to Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut facilities to ensure ongoing operation and regulatory compliance.
    - Fleet Vehicles - a total of $600,000 to purchase new or replacement vehicles used by staff to conduct maintenance checks, deliver programs, site visits, and address emergency situations.
    - Petroleum Products Small Capital - a total of $1,000,000 toward fuel storage and distribution upgrades managed by the Petroleum Products Division.
    - Transportation – a total of $2,100,000 allocated for the purchase of runway inspection vehicles and equipment attachments, and for facilities assessments, studies, and design works needed to advance projects for federal funding programs.
- $4,000,000 in 2027-2028 toward lifecycle replacements and equipment upgrades in the Local Area Network and data centres. Information technology and systems provide the framework that supports the work of the Government of Nunavut and services to Nunavummiut.
- $2,000,000 toward the Information Management/Information Technology Design Fund, which supports the planning and design of Government of Nunavut-wide information management and information technology solutions.
- $5,000,000 toward the Tenant Improvement Fund for three office renovation projects, two in Baker Lake and one in Iqaluit.
- $2,000,000 to advance the demolition and remediation of surplus buildings, a total of five projects, one project in each of Arviat, Baker Lake, Igloolik, and two projects in Sanikiluaq.
- $310,000 toward ServiceNow Modernization and implementation.

Mr. Chairman and members, the projects identified in the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut 2027-2028 capital estimates reflect a balanced approach to meeting the territory's infrastructure needs. These investments support Government of Nunavut-owned water and wastewater infrastructure, strengthen transportation infrastructure and assets, and enhance the department's capacity to deliver services to communities, client departments, and Nunavummiut across the territory.

Mr. Chairman and members, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure's 2027-2028 Capital Estimates to the Assembly. I look forward to your questions, comments, and continued collaboration as we work together to serve Nunavummiut.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Does the Chair of the Standing Committee have Opening Comments? Please proceed, Mr. Mike.

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Good afternoon. Thank you for giving us the opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Standing Committee on Community and Economic Development on its review of the proposed 2027-2028 capital estimates of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure.

The department came into existence on April 1, 2025, following the government's recent reorganization. The department's proposed capital budget for the 2027-2028 fiscal year is $53.053 million. A number of the capital projects and programs that are now under the responsibility of the department were previously administered by the former Department of Community and Government Services. (interpretation ends)

On March 10, 2023, the Nunavut Airports 20-Year Capital Needs Assessment Update: 2020-2040 was tabled in the Legislative Assembly. (interpretation) In recent years, a number of important airport infrastructure projects have received funding under the federal National Trade Corridors Fund. On January 22, 2026, the department issued a Request for Proposals for the design of a new Airport Terminal Building in Arviat. The federal government has announced that it will provide $21.8 million under the Disaster Adaptation and Mitigation Fund for this project. Members encourage the department to explore additional opportunities to apply for funding under this program for other transportation-related infrastructure projects. (interpretation ends)

On November 21, 2025, the federal government announced the creation of the new "$1.0 billion Arctic Infrastructure Fund to support dual-use, civilian/community and defence transportation projects that reinforce Canada's sovereignty, enable regional economic development and connect Northern and Indigenous communities." Members look forward to ongoing updates on the status of the government's applications under this fund.

(interpretation) The department's proposed 2027-2028 capital estimates include $1.0 million in funding for a new Runway Maintenance and Improvement Fund. The department's 2026-2027 capital estimates included funding for a number of assessments and studies, including an extension to the Naujaat airport runway and assessments of the airport terminal buildings in Igloolik and Sanirajak. Members look forward to ongoing updates on the status of these projects.

On October 18, 2019, the Government of Nunavut issued a Request for Proposals for a "Comprehensive Marine Infrastructure Scoping Study." Funding for this important work was provided through the federal Oceans Protection Plan. (interpretation ends) Information published by the government indicates that Worley Canada Services was the

successful proponent. Members note that this study was recently published on the department's website. (interpretation) Members look forward to ongoing updates on the implementation of its recommendations.

On August 4, 2021, the federal Minister of Transport announced $40.0 in funding towards the construction of a new deep water port in Qikiqtarjuaq. The department's approved 2025-2026 capital estimates included $5.070 million in funding for the project. (interpretation ends) On September 18, 2025, the Government of Nunavut announced that responsibility for the project would be transferred to the Qikiqtani Inuit Association and the Qikiqtaaluk Corporation.

The department's Community Transportation Initiatives Program Policy was last revised in February of 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." (interpretation) The Policy indicates that the department "will initiate a review of this policy no later than March 31, 2026." 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 to the Assembly. Members look forward to the ongoing and timely tabling of departmental annual reports on the administration of this important program, as well as the results of the department's review of the policy.

On August 13, 2019, the federal Minister of Transport announced funding under the National Trade Corridors Fund for a number of projects, (interpretation ends) including the study and design of an intercommunity all-season road in the Kivalliq and installation of passenger boarding ramps at seven airports. (interpretation) On September 17, 2025, the Kivalliq Inter-Community Road Study Summary Report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly. This report indicated that the total cost of the project is estimated to be approximately $2.6 billion. Members look forward to ongoing updates on the status of this project, as well as the government's role in supporting the Grays Bay Road and Port Project.

The department's proposed 2027-2028 capital estimates include $2.5 million in funding for planning studies. Members continue to encourage the Minister to begin the practice of tabling, on an annual basis, detailed information concerning the status of ongoing and completed planning studies.

The government's proposed 2027-2028 capital estimates include a total of approximately $29.9 million in funding for projects related to drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. $5.25 million of this funding is for the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure's ongoing work to replace and/or upgrade infrastructure in Rankin Inlet

and Resolute Bay. (interpretation ends) These assets are under the jurisdiction of the territorial government. The remainder of the funding is being administered by the new Department of Community Services. Information published by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada indicates that it will be submitting a report to the Legislative Assembly in 2027 concerning the management of drinking water in Nunavut. (interpretation) Members look forward to holding a televised hearing on this report.

(interpretation ends) On July 4, 2024, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission issued Telecom Decision CRTC 2024-149. The decision indicated, in part, that the Commission "approves the Government of Nunavut's funding application for up to $271.9 million to build a 1,300-kilometre fibre connection to four remote Inuit communities in Nunavut." (interpretation) During its spring 2026 sitting, the Legislative Assembly approved a $7.593 million capital carryover for the Kivalliq Baffin Connector Fibre Project. (interpretation ends) The proposed 2027-2028 capital estimates of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure do not include any funding for the Kivalliq Baffin Connector Fibre Project. The department's substantiation sheet for the project indicates that capital funding for the construction will be requested for the 2029-2030 and 2030-2031 fiscal years. The extent to which Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated will have co-ownership and co-management responsibilities for the project remains unclear.

(interpretation) That concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2027-2028 capital estimates of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut. Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Mike. Do members have any general comments on the opening remarks before we proceed to detailed questions? Seeing none. We'll now proceed to a page-by-page review of the Capital Estimates starting on page J-3. We will now review the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut Transportation Branch. Do members have any questions? Mr. Mike, go ahead.

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the officials. (interpretation ends) In 2027(sic), the Government of Nunavut submitted proposals under the National Trade Corridors Fund to relocate the airports in Kimmirut and Pangnirtung to other locations. During June of 2019, the Legislative Assembly approved $512,000 capital carryover for the Pangnirtung Airport Relocation Project. As of today, what is the status of these two initiatives? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Just a correction. When you started it was 2017, not 2027. Minister Hickes, go ahead.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, both those airports were mentioned in the past of looking at relocating. There was a study done, as the member correctly outlined. Those numbers are now significantly outdated.

So one of the initiatives that upon member questioning me earlier in this Assembly is the department is undertaking an updated costing of what it would entail to move the Pangnirtung airport.

At this time it's not something that the Government of Nunavut will be able to take on solely. Even just the older numbers from back then, it was close to half a billion dollar project. And as we're all very much aware, infrastructure costs and construction costs have increased significantly in the last, even just the last five years. So we anticipate it would cost significantly more than that, and it's not something we would be looking at taking on in the short term. But we are working behind the scenes to get a little more updated number so that at least we know what we're working with. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Next on my list I have Mr. Kablutsiak. Go ahead.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Chair. On August 13, 2019, the federal Minister of Transport announced funding under the National Trade Corridors Fund for four projects: renovation and expansion of the Rankin Inlet Airport Terminal Building, preparatory work for the Grays Bay Road and Port Project, study and design of an intercommunity all-season road in the Kivalliq, and installation of passenger boarding ramps at seven airports.

During its winter 2024 sitting, the Legislative Assembly approved $1.06 million in capital carryover funding for the Kivalliq Trade Corridor Study. In September of 2025, the Kivalliq Inter-Community Road Study Summary Report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly. As of today, what is the status of this project? Thank you, Chair.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just give me a moment, please. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry, I do apologize. I wasn't anticipating that question to come up this early on, and in the discussion as its been a little off the radar for a little while.

The study did deliver a portion of the design connecting Arviat, Whale Cove, Rankin Inlet, Chesterfield Inlet and Baker Lake. This is quite a significant project, as you can imagine. It's almost 720 kilometres in total. There's talk of 61 bridges and 177 culvert or stream crossings.

So the summary was tabled, as the member mentioned, in the fall of 2025. And similar to the airport relocation, as far as the scope of the Government of Nunavut's capacity to build or take on a project of this significant stature, I guess we'll call it, an incredible financial obligation that would be put on the Government of Nunavut. It's not a project we're able to move forward without partners. So at this time we're not looking at engaging any further development at this point, but it is on our radar.

If partners do come to the table, we do have enough information that we would be able to go forward to a next step, but we're not anywhere near that at this point. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Chair. On November 21, 2025, the federal government announced the creation of the new, "$1.0 billion Arctic Infrastructure Fund to support dual-use, civilian/community and defence transportation projects that reinforce Canada's sovereignty, enable regional economic development and connect Northern and Indigenous communities."

In addition to the Rankin Inlet runway resurfacing project, for which projects has your department submitted funding requests under this new federal program? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Mr. Hickes, go ahead.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for highlighting the great work that we did do under this program for the Rankin Inlet submission on the new terminal building. I know a significant number of the members flew through there on the way here, and I'm sure if they hadn't seen it up to that point, it's a impressive piece of infrastructure, and I can't wait for phase 2 to be completed.

Mr. Chairman, at this time there are no other submissions active under that program. We do, however -- I'll give a caveat, so just to preamble some of the different things. As we're working with our partners, especially with the Department of National Defence on a lot of these projects, we're finding overlap. So we're trying to make sure that we work forward in a way that we can leverage the opportunities as much as possible.

As we move forward with different submissions, we want to make sure that where dual-use opportunities are identified, we can. We do have some submissions to the steam 2 funding, which we just sent out earlier this summer for some equipment shelters in Gjoa Haven, Grise Fiord, Kugaaruk and Taloyoak, as well as some rehabilitation runways in Qikiqtarjuaq and Sanikiluaq, and some airport lighting at a number of different sites,

and a perimeter fence for Pond Inlet. So those are some of the things that we've submitted for phase 2 of the funding. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Chair. For which projects does your department plan to submit requests under this new federal program? Thank you, Chair.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, those were submitted under phase 2 of the Arctic Infrastructure Fund. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Mr. Kablutsiak, do you have any more questions? Go ahead.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Chair. 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 the tabling in the Legislative Assembly? Thank you, Chair.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll have to confirm with my officials and get back to the member, but I believe two documents have been already submitted. They haven't been tabled yet, so I'll just have to confirm with my officials in my response to the Committee after this, or at a later date; if possible even today I can get some confirmation. But I believe two of them have been submitted already. I just have to confirm that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Chair. Your department's Community Transportation Initiatives Program Policy indicates that, "the department will initiate a review of this policy no later than March 31, 2026."

What specific changes to the policy are being actively considered? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Minister Hickes, go ahead.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know if there's so much as changes, but under the current policy proposals are rated with how much it meets the

program objectives, the capacity of the community to carry out the work, the extent the community is prepared to contribute any additional resources, municipal equipment and local labour. So it's not so much -- it's more streamlining the processes. Those are the things that jumped out at me. Thank you. Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Chair. Your department's substantiation sheet for small craft harbours funding under the Community Marine Infrastructure Program indicates that, "call letters to the hamlets are sent out in April of each year for the upcoming fiscal year."

When were the call letters for the 2026-2027 fiscal year sent to the municipalities, and how many applications have been submitted to date? Thank you, Chair.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So those call letters go out in April of each year. I don't have a list right in front of me of which ones were approved at the community level. Unfortunately, I'll have to provide that information in my written response to the Committee as well, where I can outline which communities did apply for it and which ones did receive funding. My apologies, now that information in is in front of me. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your patience.

There were six communities that applied for funding totalling $500,000. There were Arviat to improve a community dock, Chesterfield Inlet to purchase additional floating docks, Coral Harbour to do a study of the boat lay-down and ramp area, Igloolik to purchase a new floating dock, Kimmirut for a small craft facility study, and Naujaat for a floating dock and boat ramp improvements. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your patience.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Mr. Kablutsiak, go ahead.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Chair, and this will be my last question. In 2018, the federal government announced approximately $4.73 million in funding under the Safety Equipment and Basic Marine Infrastructure in Northern Communities initiative under the Oceans Protection Plan for the installation of mooring bollards in five Nunavut communities. This federal funding was also to be used to, "complete comprehensive community scoping studies."

On October 18, 2019, the Government of Nunavut issued "Request for Proposals 2019-65: Comprehensive Marine Infrastructure Scoping Study." The RFP closed on November 18, 2019. Information published by the government indicates that Worley Canada services was the successful proponent.

Have these studies been completed, and when will the final report from this work be tabled in the Legislative Assembly? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Minister Hickes, go ahead.

Hon. George Hickes: Bear with me for a moment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My apologies. So the scoping study is complete, as the member mentioned, and it's published on our website. It is a significantly large file, so it's not something I would anticipate tabling. I can provide a link to the members if they so wish, but it is available on the website. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Any other members with questions? Mr. Taqtu, go ahead.

Mr. Taqtu: Thank you, Chair. The government's 2025-2026 capital estimates included $5.070 million in funding for the new Qikiqtarjuaq marine infrastructure project. On September 18, 2025, the Government of Nunavut announced that responsibility for the project would be transferred to the Qikiqtani Inuit Association and the Qikiqtaaluk Corporation.

As of today, what is the status of the transfer process? Thank you, Chair.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the member is correct that the design and work that have been done up to date on the Qikiqtarjuaq Port under the Government of Nunavut's project was transferred just before the election last year.

At this time, we're not considering ourselves a proponent. The scope of the project grew far outside our original intent and what we were approved for, so the scope of work even changed significantly. The last government decided to transfer that project to Qikiqtaaluk Inuit Association, and right now that's where it lies. So there are still some negotiations going on exactly on how that project will move forward without government engagement. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Taqtu: Thank you, Chair. Your department's proposed 2027-2028 capital estimates include $800,000 in funding for the replacement of the Rankin Inlet airport terminal building.

As of today, what is the status of this project? Thank you, Chair.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I mentioned a couple of times, I was very excited to be part of the official grand opening of the airport terminal, along with Minister Chartrand from the federal government, and our Member of Parliament as well just at the end of September.

The first phase of the terminal, which is in operation now -- I believe it was June 23 I think it was brought online -- and has been used since. Literally once the phase 1 opened, they started the demolition of the old terminal and, in fact, they've already got the foundation, and the walls are going up as we speak right now. And looking at having it closed-in for the winter so that work can continue into some of the colder months. And then we can get to phase 2, as I was asked a question on it the other day.

Some of the significant improvements: There's seating for over 200 more people, and a specific Elders' area that's bringing in very comfortable seating for Elders. Hopefully their layovers are no longer than need be. And also a children's play area, which I think is going to be an exciting component that people will really appreciate. The kids will have some way to expend some of the their energy before they get on the plane.

I guess one of the complaints that we got from phase 2, if I can call it that, was that you can't see the apron anymore; you can't see the planes landing. So even from the staff from some of the airlines, I heard some concerns that way.

So I'm happy to announce that in phase 2 there will be windows that people can watch the planes coming in, and know when their planes are departing and watch the people come off. So those are just some of the significant areas -- expansion of the concession area. So we're excited about phase 2.

I'm very excited that phase 1 is done and that literally within a week the demolition and further construction of the foundation and, like I said, the walls are being put up as we speak. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Taqtu: Thank you, Chair. Your department's proposed 2027-2028 capital estimates include $11.555 million in funding for resurfacing of the Rankin Inlet airport runway. Your department's five-year capital plan indicates $118.08 million has been budgeted for this project, of which $89.56 million is expected to be provided by the federal government under the Arctic Infrastructure Fund.

Has the federal government confirmed this funding? Thank you, Chair.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And Mr. Chairman, as I've mentioned earlier, I was very pleased by the attendance of Minister Chartrand from the federal government to the airport terminal opening at the end of September in Rankin Inlet. And at that time the Minister announced the funding for the runway rehabilitation project in Rankin Inlet, so, yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Taqtu, go ahead.

Mr. Taqtu: Thank you, Chair. Are there any other runways in Nunavut that are being considered for paving or resurfacing? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Taqtu. Minister Hickes, go ahead.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know we've got a couple of projects. I mentioned in my Opening Comments on resurfacing, but as far as paving goes, the next on my list -- and we've been having discussions with our federal partners already -- is getting Cambridge Bay airport paved.

As I spoke to the member from there yesterday in the House when he was asking me questions on this, I think we all recognize the efficiency that it would bring to that community as a hub, which will help alleviate the domino effect of alleviating stresses on neighbouring communities as well. So that's the next one on my wish list. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Kablutsiak, go ahead.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Chair. Your department's proposed 2027-2028 capital estimates include $1.0 million in funding for a new Runway Maintenance and Improvement Fund. What specific projects are planned for the 2027-2028 fiscal year? Thank you, Chair.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So right now we've got some projects that are in the pipeline in Grise Fiord stockpiling aggregate. In Kinngait, an airfield lighting upgrade and backup generators installation, and as well as deicing and winter service treatments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Chair, and this will be my last question. On January 22, 2026 your department issued a Request for Proposals for the design of a new Airport Terminal Building in Arviat. The federal government has announced that it will provide $21.8 million under the Disaster Adaptation and Mitigation Fund for this project.

Has your department applied for funding under this program for any other airport infrastructure projects? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Minister Hickes, go ahead.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the question. Right now that program has been fully prescribed. However, just like I didn't let the -- so the member is aware, we're progressing quite rapidly on the Arviat airport terminal replacement, and we're anticipating it going out to tender this winter with hopefully construction starting in the summer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Next on my list is Mr. Iqaluq.

Mr. Iqaluq: Thank you, Chair. My question is for the issues for the mobile equipment shelter. Your department's 2025-2026 capital estimates included $7.354 million in funding for the construction of mobile equipment shelters. Your department's 2026-2027 capital estimates included 2.0 million in funding. Your department's proposed 2027-2028 capital estimates include $2.6 million in funding. Your department's five-year capital plan indicates that this is the final year of funding for this project.

As of today, what is the status of this project? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Iqaluq. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So with the funding that we've received to date, we've anticipated doing seven mobile shelters. We did three this year and three that will be basically the foundations have begun. So we'll be looking at completing those hopefully in the next year or two.

And going forward, as mentioned, that funding is no longer going to be available, so we'll have to start looking at other airport infrastructure fund projects that would fit within that scope. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Iqaluq, go ahead.

Mr. Iqaluq: Thank you, Chair. My question for the issue of the (indiscernible) and demolishing of old airport terminal buildings.

The Department of Economic Development and Transportation's 2018-2021 Business Plan indicated that one of its ongoing priorities has been to, "complete planning work for remediation and removal of decommissioned airport buildings in the Qikiqtarjuaq, Coral Harbour, Nanisivik, Sanikiluaq and Resolute Bay."

The department's 2018-2019 capital estimates included $850,000 in funding for the decommissioning of the Old Airport Terminal Building in Sanikiluaq. Your department's 2026-2027 capital estimates included $260,000 in funding for the "demolition of the "Old Airport Terminal Building in Kinngait."

What is your department's timetable for remediating and removing decommissioned airport buildings in Qikiqtarjuaq, Coral Harbour, Nanisivik and Resolute Bay? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Iqaluq. Minister Hickes, go ahead.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So yes, Mr. Chair, this year we demolished the old terminal in Kinngait. And going forward, we still have to look at availability within the community on prioritization of -- so I'll have to look at our prioritization list to see where Sanikiluaq fits in that list, I guess, and I can have a discussion with the member after. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Iqaluq, do you have anymore questions? No. Mr. Kuliktana, go ahead.

Mr. Kuliktana: Thank you, Chair. My question is in regards to the infrastructure funding. On August 12, 2021, the federal Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs announced that, "$517.8 million is available for shovel-ready infrastructure projects for Inuit communities. This funding will help close the infrastructure gaps by 2030."

To what extent is the Government of Nunavut working with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami to identify specific projects? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman I appreciate the question on a couple of different fronts. One, just as recently as a couple of weeks ago, the entire cabinet met with the board at the Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, where it was highlighted how much we can accomplish together.

I think we're at kind of a new phase of our relationship, I think, where there's a lot more desire to collaborate and make sure we're not duplicating things, as well as leveraging federal investments that come through Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami through President Obed. I know I've had discussions with him as well on making sure that we're aligned in our messaging.

So I'm not speaking to specific projects, per se, but I'm speaking to I guess the general feel or the general -- I'm trying to think of the right word -- collaboration I guess is recognizing how important it is that we communicate. That's the word I was looking for. How important it is that we communicate with each other so we can identify our priorities, figure out where we can collaborate, or figure out where we can get out of each other's way.

There's a number of different initiatives that we can move forward where having support from the Inuit organizations would help substantiate our proposals to the federal government and vice-versa, where Inuit organizations could apply for funding that would support our objectives as well. It's not unprecedented.

I'm not trying to say we're reinventing the wheel, but the level of support that we're having for each other right now is in a very good space, if I can just put it that way. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Kuliktana, go ahead.

Mr. Kuliktana: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Minister, for the response. On June 15, 2023 the Chairperson of the Council of the Federation sent correspondence to the Prime Minister of Canada concerning the replacement of the investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. The letter indicated that the position of provincial and territorial Premiers is that the federal government should provide, "block infrastructure transfers."

On June 21, 2023 federal, provincial and territorial Ministers of Infrastructure held a meeting. What is the federal government's current position concerning the replacement investing of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program with block infrastructure transfers to provincial and territorial governments? Thank you.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, at that meeting that the member is referring to, there was a significant amount of discussion around certain I guess funding programs being eliminated or moved, I guess transferring responsibilities. And the whole intent of that is to streamline the processes and allow more project to be submitted for proposals to be able to actually go to construction.

So right now I think the overall perspective and the feel is that as we identify what funding pots are available under what programs, under what initiatives, that will help clarify, and those discussions are ongoing as we -- I will say unprecedented almost in this scope where the amount of focus that's on the Arctic right now is not since the Cold War, as its been discussed.

So I think there's been a lot of announcements with a lot of work behind it that still needs to get sorted out on what fits where, but I'm very encouraged by my discussion with Minister Robertson at the federal level, as well as Minister MacKinnon at the Transport level, that there is a significant focus on us right now on how we can move projects forward.

So there's a significant number of different programs that were there before, and we're looking at, like, the maximum federal contribution out of all those programs is close to $2 billion. So when we look at finding what block fits into what hole, I think that's a very important component of how we move forward; and just going back to my earlier responses, how we prioritize with our partners and stakeholders on which projects to support and which ones to really push for.

So I know it's not really a firm response to the member, but I think it encompasses what stage we're at now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Kuliktana, go ahead.

Mr. Kuliktana: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for Minister's response. This is my last question in regards to federal infrastructure.

On July 16, 2024, the Council of the Federation announced that, "Premiers are extremely dismayed that the 2024 federal budget did not include a successor to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program or a new National Trade Corridors Fund."

As of today, what is the status of discussions with the federal government concerning these programs? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kuliktana. Mr. Hickes, go ahead.

Mr. Hickes: Sorry, Mr. Chairman. I just missed the last 30 seconds of the question, if the member could just repeat the last sentence.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Kuliktana, go ahead.

Mr. Kuliktana: Thank you, Chair. My last question was: As of today, what is the status of discussions with the federal government concerning these programs? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: Thank you for clarifying that, Mr. Kuliktana. Mr. Hickes, go ahead.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Like I'd mentioned, I think it's very important to recognize that the federal government is recognizing how general some of the programs are becoming, so it allows more projects within the -- to allow more projects to be proposed within the scope of what the federal program is.

So where some of the federal programs before were very restrictive of what we could apply for and what would fit within the parameters for approval, are now becoming more general and a little bit broader, so it allows more programming.

I'll use some examples of investment in long-term care. I remember those discussions I was Health Minister 10 years ago that the federal government would refuse to invest in any Health infrastructure.

Through those discussions it's evolved now where they are actually investing in long-term care. Where we look at some of the other projects with Education, even within Transportation sectors there is limited scope. So now as we're getting more general programming criteria, it allows us to apply more projects to their programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. I believe that's all the questions we have under the Transportation branch, unless members have other questions under this branch. Otherwise we'll reserve them for the next ones. Mr. Mike, go ahead.

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to go back to marine infrastructure. We passed Marine Infrastructure Program. I had a question in regards to that. In marine infrastructure there's an improvement program for future in Pangnirtung. Marine infrastructure has been in operation for 13 years now. I have not heard any improvement work to be done in regards to that. I know that you're planning or working on that. Have you -- you probably will have to consider those aspects, because these marine infrastructures need improvement after years of being used.

With that, I would like to ask the Minister that if that's in the radar to or provide funding for maintenance and improvement of marine infrastructure?

I know that the federal government has funding. Will we apply for funding for that? I would like to know what status it is for Pangnirtung marine infrastructure improvement? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regards to the existing port or marine infrastructure in Pangnirtung, there was a federal program, as I know the member is very, very much aware of. So any improvements within that would likely have to go through the hamlet or make submissions to the Government of Nunavut for any improvements and to see whether it would fit within our budget parameters.

But I can say some of the ongoing activities right now is there's more in bollards in Pangnirtung that are going in. There's resupply shore manifold relocation. There's a phase 1 of that, as well as replacement of a four-inch pipeline with a six-inch pipeline for fuel resupply. I believe that's it right now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Thank you. We'll be able to work on the marine infrastructure, and I've been planning to work on it for quite some time. (interpretation ends) There should be some program policy that could indicate the continuation of monitoring any harbour, small craft harbour that's going to be up. I believe that there should be a policy developed, even for improvement area within the government policy.

There is Community Transportation Initiative Program policy in place, and there's also Community Marine Infrastructure Program. That probably can have a policy in place to improve improvements projects so that we could be on top of infrastructures within Nunavut under a marine program.

And I know it's in the federal hands right now, and that I just want to make sure that, you know, probably some tender now and that I just want to make sure that whatever is said by the federal government that, you know, look at the example for Pangnirtung airport airstrip relocation, it just kind of disappeared even though there was approval for carryover of half a million dollars. And I don't want to see that for the improvement in small craft harbour, you know.

We don't know how much it's going to cost yet, but I guess after the tender is closed, we probably are going to know and that this kind of policy that affects my community. Like half a million dollars just very recently just kind of disappeared from the capital planning, and it was approved for carryover.

So I don't want to see this kind of project just to -- there's nice announcement that there's going to be improvement made, but you never know if they want to cut that project. I don't know. So I want to see better communication or better policy in place to deal with those kind of programs we have. Thank you, Chair.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I appreciate where the member is coming from. We do get crossover. For an example, as mentioned and as the member acknowledges, there was a federal program that built that marine infrastructure in Pangnirtung. So it's operated by the hamlet in that regard. So there are funding applications that they can promote throughout the federal government to make improvements on.

But also within our own programming within the Government of Nunavut, if it's identified as a community priority through their submission to Community Services, they can request improvement monies to existing port infrastructure. I hope that answers the member's question. Thank you.

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

Mr. Mike: *Qujannamiik*. I was surprised by the federal government, even the hamlet council that they were surprised too that there was going to be funding coming to Pang for their small craft harbour. It was never in the plan here. So what I'm saying is that we've got to be more aware of those areas to make sure that it's not only an announcement. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for that clarification, Mr. Mike. I think it's very important to recognize -- and I know I've had these discussions with Mr. Roberts and with the Department of Infrastructure Canada to make sure that we know what's being applied for under certain funding programs. So I'll take this back to my people and I'll have some discussions with Minister MacKinnon's Office and with other federal agencies, such as the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, which I believe was behind this project, to make sure that we're kept in the loop as projects are coming forward that may and do have an impact on our community infrastructure as well.

Any time there's construction going on, it puts more pressure on the community. As well, as infrastructure is developed, there's operations and maintenance components that we have to factor in. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. I believe that's the last of the question under Transportation Branch. So do members degree with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut Transportation Branch, total capital expenditures of $23,293,000?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please go to page J-5. We will now review the Department of Infrastructure Nunavut Infrastructure Branch. Do members have any questions? Mr. Qammaniq, go ahead.

Mr. Qammaniq (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your department's proposed 2027-2028 capital estimates include $2.5 million for Planning Studies. What Planning Studies will be funded through this budget? *Qujannamiik*.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I do apologize. I just got this to the members very recently and just in the last few days.

Mr. Chairman, the elementary school in Igloolik, Arviat water treatment infrastructure, Iqaluit old air terminal building, the old health centre in Kinngait, a tank farm capacity increase in cold compliance in Rankin Inlet, the Kugaaruk Health Centre, and full-day kindergarten planning for Rankin Inlet. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Qammaniq, go ahead.

Mr. Qammaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) On February 27, 2025, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission issued Telecom Order CRTC 2025-60 Broadband Fund - Acceptance of Statement of Work for the Government of Nunavut's Transport Fibre Project in Nunavut. The order indicated that Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated provided a letter of support for the project.

To what extent will NTI have co-ownership and co-management responsibilities for the project? *Qujannamiik*.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Hang on a minute. I'm trying to see if this goes under this branch or Information Technology Branch. I believe that question is under the next branch, Mr. Qammaniq.

Do members have any more questions -- so the Infrastructure Branch is Replacement of Critical Water and Sewer Mains, Resolute Bay Waste Water Plant Planning Studies, Surplus Building Demolition, and Remediation Tenant Improvement Funds and Minor Capital for Transportation Infrastructure and Petroleum Products. So any questions related to those?

If there are no other questions from members under the Infrastructure Branch, do members agree with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut Infrastructure Branch, total capital expenditures of $23,450,000?

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 Information Technology Branch.
Mr. Qammaniq, you can ask your question now. Thank you.

Mr. Qammaniq: On February 27, 2025, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission issued Telecom Order CRTC 2025-60 Broadband Fund - Acceptance of Statement of Work for the Government of Nunavut's Transport Fibre Project in Nunavut. The order indicated that Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated provide a letter of support for the project.

To what extent will NTI have co-ownership and co-management responsibilities for the project? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Minister Hickes, go ahead.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate the member's question. As you can imagine, it's a very complex topic when you look at the complexities of fibre entering and then being operated. Wherever there's an opportunity for government -- this is one of those cases where there's an opportunity for us to stay out of the way and let private operations occur. I think it is an opportunity there.
Those discussions are ongoing, and it would be very preliminary and presumptive of me to comment on where we are with those discussions right now.

But there are with the federal government, with CRTC, or Canada Radio-Television Corporation, and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, we're all at the table in discussion on how best this project would move forward and under what operation model would be most productive for Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Qammaniq.

Mr. Qammaniq (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your department's proposed 2027-2028 capital estimates do not include any funding for the Kivalliq Baffin Connector Fibre Project. The substantiation sheet for the project indicates that capital funding for the construction will be requested for the 2029-2030 and 2030-2031 fiscal years.

As of today, what is the status of the design and procurement process for the project? *Qujannamiik*.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Basically kind of in a nutshell my response is the same as my last one, but I'll throw a caveat in there. As I'd mentioned earlier, this is in my lifetime an unprecedented focus on the Arctic, and telecommunications is a huge part of that.

When you take into consideration Department of National Defence needs and wants compared to what projects we have had on the books for a significant number of years that we've been carrying these over, there's even more overlap -- and I don't want to say confusion. I think it's just making sure that we're aligning our project so it's most impactful for all the stakeholders at the table, whether it be Nunavummiut, the general person off the street, Corporate, the Government of Nunavut, the federal government, and the Department of National Defence needs and requirements.

So it's a very complicated pool right now; a lot of these discussions going on simultaneously, and we want to make sure that as all of these, or any and all of these projects move forward, that we're able to maximize the effectiveness of the dollars that are being invested.
I know there's a significant federal investment in these projects, but there's a significant Government of Nunavut investment into these. So we want to make sure that we're expending the dollars that we're obligated under these projects to spend in the most effective and appropriate manner. I hope that answers the member's question. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Qammaniq.

Mr. Qammaniq: *Qujannamiik*. Your department's proposed 2027-2028 capital estimates include $4 million in funding for communication technology infrastructure upgrades. What specific upgrades are planned to be undertaken with this funding? *Qujannamiik*.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Minister Hickes, go ahead.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you. I might be confusing a project, so I just want to clarify something before I give a response. Thank you. My apologies, Mr. Chairman. It's a good thing I asked. I was thinking of a different project and program.

So basically, Mr. Chairman, so as modernization in the communities, so one of the things that we've been working with, I'll use Northwestel as an example; they received money to have fibre in the communities. So we work with them to make sure that Government of

Nunavut offices are logged in or I guess attached to those fibres as well, well as just as general equipment; as things age out, they need to be replaced.

So it's a fairly general scope, but I hope that answers the member's question. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Qammaniq, go ahead.

Mr. Qammaniq: *Qujannamiik*. Your department's substantiation sheet for this project indicates that, "the information management/information technology division is drastically underfunded.".

Do you agree with this statement? *Qujannamiik*.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I've got to be careful how I answer that; I just saw the Minister of Finance walk in the room a moment ago.

Mr. Chairman, as all departments bring forward business requests or business proposals to business cases to the Department of Finance and through other evaluation groups that our Deputy Ministers and our Assistant Deputies work on, and we're always having to balance what we have versus what we need. So I do stand by the statement that it is underfunded.

And I know that the staff there are doing the best with what we've got. And I think in our own -- I don't want to say defence I guess, but we need to do maybe a better job of explaining why our business cases need to be looked at through another lens, where I can give more support to my information management/information technology team.

I've often been quoted as saying, "As a minister, it's my job to give the department the resources to do their job." So I've got further work to do along with my members around the table here right now on identifying specific needs where we can make improvements and justify those cases. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Qammaniq, go ahead.

Mr. Qammaniq (interpretation): Yes, thank you. (interpretation ends) What specific amount of funding does the Division consider to be 'adequate'? *Qujannamiik*.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have a number. It's more on what more we could do if we had more money. So we would have to identify specific projects within that to, I guess to bring focus to.

So it's not like give me a blank cheque, I can make everything better. That's not the case.

We want to make sure that as we appropriate monies for specific causes and want specific outcomes that we can achieve those.

So it would be on a case by case basis, Mr. Chairman. So I wouldn't be able to give an exact number what I feel we're short of. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Qammaniq, go ahead.

Mr. Qammaniq: *Qujannamiik*. Your department's proposed 2027-2028 capital estimates include $2.0 million in funding for its "Information Management/Information Technology Design Fund.".

What specific design projects are planned to be undertaken with this funding? *Qujannamiik*.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, Mr. Chairman, those monies would be allocated on an as-needed on-demand basis that departments bring submissions to us on what type of improvements that they need, and then our folks at the Information Management/Information Technology would work the client departments to fulfill that need or to fill that gap. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. I believe that's all the questions under this branch from members. Do members agree with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut Information Management/Information Branch, total capital expenditures of $6,310,000?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: If members wish, I believe we missed a question under J-5 regarding surplus buildings. I don't know if members want to ask that question and then we can revote on J-5. Is that what the members want to do, or do we want to go to page J-9? I guess we'll go to J-9. I'm not hearing anything from the members on that. So J-9 Petroleum Products Division. There is no budget for this, but I'll open the floor for questions. Mr. Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Chair. The 2023-2024 Capital Estimates of the Department of Community and Government Services included $13.1 in funding for the Arviat Tank Farm project. The total cost of the project is estimated at $63.0 million. No funding for this project is included in your department's proposed 2027-2028 capital estimates. $16.2 million in funding is projected to be included in your department's 2028-2029 capital estimates.

As of today, what is the status of this project? Thank you, Chair.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I'm sure the member is aware, there was some significant delays with the site selection. Thankfully, those were recently resolved and the project design proceeded this summer, and we're looking at going to construction tender early in 2027 as long as all the planning steps for the lot are completed.

So I believe the city council passed the motion approving the site location. We just want to make sure all of our environmental assessment and all that stuff, the preparing is complete. So then we would go to tender in the coming months and hopefully get into the construction in summer of 2027. Thank you. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Now, please go to page J-2. Do members agree with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut total capital expenditures of $53,053,000?

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. Brief closing comments. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you to substantiate our budget request for the 2027-2028 capital year, fiscal year. But I would also like to -- I'd be remiss if I didn't thank, I know you see Mr. Hawkins and Mr. Devereaux sitting beside me handing me notes and opening screens for me and stuff, but they're just the figureheads for all the work that goes on behind them.

Mr. Chairman and members, there's a significant amount of work as a client to provide service to our client departments to make sure that we're meeting the obligations and the needs of our service departments that are out there serving Nunavummiut everyday face-to-face, to make sure that they've got a safe place to work in, as well as a way to communicate through our Information Management and Information Technology, and overseeing all the procurement for the Government of Nunavut.

There's a lot of work that goes into preparing myself and my colleagues for these appearances. But it's the everyday stuff that our appearances here distract our staff from working on their day jobs. So I can only imagine, and I've been in those shoes in the past of "the Minister needs this right away," and everyone is scrambling around trying to get it for us.

So being that person in the past, I can appreciate the work that goes into help and prepare the documents and all the substantiation information that the Committee has at their availability.

So I just want to thank everyone for the process that we've gone through here today, and I look forward to fulfilling the commitments that I made earlier. Thank you.

>>*Applause*

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

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

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Taqtu. We have a motion on the floor to report progress, and the motion is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? Motion is carried. I will now rise to report progress.

>>*Committee concludes, and House re-convenes at 17:12*.

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Pedersen?

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 10, *Appropriation (Capital) Act, 2027-2028* and 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): We have a motion. Seconder? Mr. Qammaniq. Against? Motion is carried. Item 21, Third Reading of Bills. Item 22, *Orders of the Day*. Clerk.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Mr. Clerk (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Standing Committee on Legislation at 10 a.m. in the Nanuq boardroom at 10 a.m. tomorrow morning. *Orders for the Day* tomorrow morning, Thursday, October 29:

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

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. We've finished off early. Our meeting today in the House is adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday. We'll resume October 29 at 1:30. Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>House adjourns 17:15