



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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Number 25

1<sup>st</sup> Session

35<sup>th</sup> Legislature

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## HANSARD

Tuesday, November 2, 2021 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## 2021 Fall Sitting

**SPEAKER** — Hon. Jeremy Harper, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun  
**DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE** — Annie Blake, MLA, Vuntut Gwitchin  
**DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE** — Emily Tredger, MLA, Whitehorse Centre

### CABINET MINISTERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
Hon. Sandy Silver	Klondike	Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Finance
Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee	Riverdale South	Deputy Premier Government House Leader Minister of Health and Social Services; Justice
Hon. Nils Clarke	Riverdale North	Minister of Highways and Public Works; Environment
Hon. John Streicker	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Public Service Commission; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Ranj Pillai	Porter Creek South	Minister of Economic Development; Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission
Hon. Richard Mostyn	Whitehorse West	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Jeanie McLean	Mountainview	Minister of Education; Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate

### OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

#### Yukon Party

Currie Dixon	Leader of the Official Opposition Copperbelt North	Scott Kent	Official Opposition House Leader Copperbelt South
Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Patti McLeod	Watson Lake
Yvonne Clarke	Porter Creek Centre	Geraldine Van Bibber	Porter Creek North
Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin

### THIRD PARTY

#### New Democratic Party

Kate White	Leader of the Third Party Takhini-Kopper King
Emily Tredger	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
Annie Blake	Vuntut Gwitchin

### LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Clerk of the Assembly	Dan Cable
Deputy Clerk	Linda Kolody
Clerk of Committees	Allison Lloyd
Sergeant-at-Arms	Karina Watson
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Joseph Mewett
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly**  
**Whitehorse, Yukon**  
**Tuesday, November 2, 2021 — 1:00 p.m.**

**Speaker absent**

**Clerk:** It is my duty, pursuant to the provisions of section 24 of the *Legislative Assembly Act*, to inform the Legislative Assembly of the absence of the Speaker.

*Deputy Speaker takes the Chair*

**Deputy Speaker (Ms. Blake):** I will now call the House to order.

We will proceed at this time with prayers.

*Prayers*

**DAILY ROUTINE**

**Deputy Speaker:** We will proceed at this time with the Order Paper.

Introduction of visitors.

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** I would like to ask my colleagues to help me welcome our new president of Yukon University and vice-chancellor, Dr. Lesley Brown — welcome to the House — and also Lacia Kinnear, the associate vice-president of Yukon University. Thank you for coming today.

*Applause*

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I would also like to send out a warm welcome from the Legislative Assembly to individuals who are here for our tribute for Yukoner Appreciation Week: Susan Guatto, the executive director of the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce; Andrei Samson, programs manager for the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce; Bernie Hoeschele, who is there as well with their team and part of their support staff; Lars Hartling, the chair of the board of directors, is with us today; Jerome Casanova, first vice-chair, board of directors; as well as Trevor Mead-Robins, director of the chamber's board and well-known owner of MEADIA solutions. Thank you for coming today.

*Applause*

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** For the tribute to Lindsay Staples, I would like to introduce a few individuals. I apologize in advance, through a combination of the mask and maybe late-arriving attendees, if I miss anybody.

With the Department of Environment, we have Christine Cleghorn, Stephanie Muckenheim, Matt Clarke, Marc Cattet, and Thomas Jung. I am also advised that there are retired environmental department staff: Rob Florkiewicz and Dan Lindsey and perhaps Bruce McLean as well. Jennifer Smith, the current chair of the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope); Kaitlin Wilson, program manager for the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope). If anyone is listening in — the Inuvialuit

colleagues on the various boards and committees that Lindsay has been interacting with and supporting over the last more than three decades — welcome to all of you.

Of course, I would be remiss if I didn't introduce Lindsay Staples and his spouse, Heather Alton.

*Applause*

**Deputy Speaker:** Tributes.

**TRIBUTES**

**In recognition of Lindsay Staples**

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** I rise to pay tribute to Lindsay Staples, a long-time advocate for the conservation of wildlife and traditional Inuvialuit use on the Yukon North Slope. Lindsay has the distinction of being the first chair of the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope), a co-management body arising from the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*.

Lindsay has recently retired after spending over 30 years fulfilling the role of chair for the council. I must concede that I knew he had this role, but I had no idea that it was for that long.

Since the council's inception in 1987, Lindsay has worked hard to ensure that a healthy environment and robust wildlife populations are maintained in this special part of the Yukon. In particular, Lindsay's efforts in protecting critical habitat for the Porcupine caribou herd on the Yukon North Slope are commendable. He has also spent years advocating for the inclusion of Inuvialuit interests and values in the realm of polar bear management.

Lindsay has a long-standing passion and respect for the land and the people of the Inuvialuit settlement region. Early on, Lindsay recognized the importance of holding the summer council meetings on the land of the Yukon North Slope so that council members could see and experience the unique landscape and wildlife that they were responsible for stewarding.

During his 30-year career with the council, Lindsay built strong and trusted relationships with Inuvialuit leaders, elders, and other co-management bodies, as well as governments, wildlife management organizations, NGOs, and conservation groups.

In collaboration with the Government of Yukon, Lindsay led 10 Yukon North Slope conferences, each larger than the previous, with over 170 delegates in attendance at the last conference in 2015.

Lindsay has been a strong advocate for the recognition and use of traditional knowledge in decision-making processes. For example, Lindsay's support for the Inuvialuit polar bear traditional knowledge project was a milestone in integrating two ways of knowing into polar bear management.

In 2015, Lindsay was honoured with the Inuvialuktun name "Kisaun", which means "anchor". Lindsay's leadership and advocacy for the Yukon North Slope have always been anchored in the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*. This honour is a testament to the level of respect that he has garnered from the Inuvialuit people for his work in ensuring that their vision for the Yukon North Slope is respected and maintained.

Lindsay has made a lasting contribution to the conservation and management of the Yukon North Slope and the implementation of the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*. Beyond his work with implementing the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*, Lindsay has had a significant and meaningful career as a facilitator and project manager on so many wildlife and final agreement implementation initiatives, including work with the Porcupine Caribou Management Board.

His creativity, resourcefulness, and pragmatism with so many issues have certainly left a mark on how we work together to realize the vision outlined in our agreements and kept our expectations high for ourselves and for each other. His approach of consistently being fair and informed, and expecting the same of others around the table, has pushed, and sometimes pulled, us to a better place.

Thank you for all that you have done in the last 30-plus years as the chair of the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope). Thank you very much.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP and the Yukon Party to congratulate Lindsay Staples on his well-earned retirement from the Wildlife Management Advisory Council, a key element of the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement* advising indigenous and non-indigenous governments on issues in the western Arctic, including Yukon. There is no doubt that Mr. Staples has had a beautiful career in the north — one that has contributed much to our understanding of what giving effect to reconciliation really means.

For many, including no doubt many in this Chamber, Lindsay Staples is one of the unsung heroes whose quiet passion for people and place has resulted in the creation of significant beneficial changes that affect northern communities and citizens throughout Yukon and the western Arctic. That passion and commitment to people and the good stewardship of the environment have even extended, in more recent years, to work in East Africa.

From his early work in Yukon on the groundbreaking and innovative Yukon 2000 in the mid-1980s — a process that asked Yukoners across the territory to envision the Yukon of the new millennia and resulted in substantive changes to government programs and policies — to his work on Yukon's *Environment Act*, our human rights legislation, as well as amendments to the Yukon *Wildlife Act* to give effect to the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement* in Yukon law, Lindsay Staples has contributed to the essential fabric of our northern community.

In addition to his work in the Inuvialuit region, Lindsay was an instrumental part in the successful negotiation of the Kwanlin Dün final and self-government agreements that were signed in 2005. He also worked with the Selkirk First Nation in addressing socio-economic impacts of resource development.

The threads that tie all of his work together are the values that he places on active and effective listening and the relationships that flow as a result of truly hearing the views of others. This gift has contributed to his ability to work with diverse interests toward collaborative outcomes. A common theme to his approach has been to assist those he works with to

see that the main challenge is to shift our perspective away from projects to values.

His role in helping to develop a better understanding of, and giving effect to, the intention behind negotiated agreements has contributed to the success of such diverse initiatives as the 2019 *Porcupine Caribou Native User Agreement*. This involved the eight indigenous governing bodies in the Yukon and Northwest Territories fulfilling the intent of the commitment in the 1984 Inuvialuit agreement to give effect to the key issues associated with the healthy and sustainable management and harvest of this iconic herd.

In addition, the multi-year process leading to the finalization of the North Slope plan is another significant contribution that Lindsay has been involved in over the years.

This significance of the work and the community building that has evolved in the western Arctic as numerous elements of the Inuvialuit agreement have been worked on, debated, and implemented cannot be overstated. I encourage everyone to listen to the podcast by the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) in which you can hear Mr. Staples as he shares his 30 years of experience with the council and outlines how the Inuvialuit, the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Yukon, and Parks Canada found ways to effectively work together to create new national parks on the Yukon North Slope, which are managed collaboratively.

In a career that has spanned decades, there are, without a doubt, countless more stories to tell and events to celebrate, but I want to note that one of the more touching signs of respect that Mr. Staples has earned over the span of his career was to receive the Inuvialuit name “Kisaun”, which, as we heard, means “anchor”. Today we thank you for your solid and continued contributions.

*Applause*

### **In recognition of Yukoner Appreciation Week and Buy Local November**

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon government to pay tribute to Yukoner Appreciation Week and Buy Local November. Buy Local November is an annual campaign coordinated by the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce that promotes Yukon businesses and is highlighted by Yukoner Appreciation Day. Last year, Yukoner Appreciation Day was expanded to become a week-long event, and I am glad to see that this will continue for a second year. Yukoner Appreciation Week features local businesses and organizations offering customers and clients discounts, prizes, and fun activities. This year's event kicks off today, running through to November 7.

Shopping locally should always be a priority for Yukoners, but it is now more important than ever. As we know, the pandemic hit some of our local businesses very hard, and they need our support during this recovery period. This is an excellent time to celebrate the Yukon's businesses while benefiting from great offers and chances to win prizes. By shopping at participating businesses during Yukoner Appreciation Week, you will have the chance to win one of five \$1,000 gift cards to the businesses of your choice. This year,

there are over 90 participating businesses offering savings to locals. I want to thank the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce for once again coordinating the festivities and for bringing all of these businesses together.

I encourage all Yukoners to take advantage of this occasion and to show their support for these incredible local businesses, and please, for folks who don't have the opportunity to be in Whitehorse over this period of time — whatever Yukon community you live in — please support those local businesses. There is such an array of businesses that need us to lean in.

This event presents a great opportunity to reconnect to some of your favourite shops, get a head start on holiday shopping, or discover a location that you have never visited before. We have so many fantastic business owners here in the Yukon, and I am happy to see many of them participating in the Yukoner Appreciation Week.

Yukon businesses have demonstrated resilience and creativity through the pandemic in adapting to changing public health measures and finding new ways to go above and beyond for their customers. I hope that all Yukoners have a safe and joyful Yukoner Appreciation Week and buy local in November.

*Applause*

**Ms. Van Bibber:** I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize November 2 to 7 as Yukoner Appreciation Week. This week's campaign is brought to us by the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce with over 90 participating businesses. Over the week, businesses will be showing their appreciation to Yukoners through deals, fun activities, and offerings at their locations. Watch for free gifts, prizes, and discounts at each place, and also enter to win the big prizes — one of five \$1,000 gift certificates. There is going to be something to do and see at all of these many stops.

There are so many advantages to supporting and shopping local. It not only keeps the money moving our economy at home, but it builds neighbourhoods and adds community strength. The friends and neighbours who own these businesses are part of the fabric of any town. It has been proven that a strong local economy means a more prosperous area that is well-connected and is better off all around for the health and well-being of its residents.

It wasn't long ago that we gave a tribute to Small Business Week, and I stressed the importance of "shop local" — or "please shop local". The local infrastructure that houses these businesses pays taxes. They support local, non-profit events and charities, and they sponsor sports teams and many other things. They give back big time. How can each of us do our part? Return the kindness by visiting the many, many unique and interesting stores that provide a plethora of items for purchase.

With the Christmas holiday season right around the corner, the shelves are filled with goodies to ooh and aah over. I am sure that you can find that perfect something for someone you like.

Yukon businesses have been through a lot over the past year and a half, with the coming of COVID and the rapid changes in our world. Yukoners have risen to the occasion, so

let us all continue to do so. Get out, not only this week but every time we need or want something. Check out local before you search elsewhere.

To all the participating businesses and to the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce for spearheading this initiative, we appreciate all of the planning and caring. Thank you.

*Applause*

**Ms. Tredger:** I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate Yukoner Appreciation Week. Local businesses support the Yukon. Just try to find an event, sports team, or performance that doesn't have sponsorship from a local Yukon business. They support Yukoners, and Yukoners support them.

The Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce is making supporting local businesses extra easy this week. As my colleague mentioned, there are over 90 participating businesses this year. We can't wait to get out there and enjoy the specials this week. We encourage all Yukoners to do the same. Also, remember to shop local all year-round.

*Applause*

**Deputy Speaker:** Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

## TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I have for tabling the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board's 2020-21 annual report.

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Pursuant to Section 53(3) of the *Yukon University Act*, I have for tabling the 2020-21 annual report.

**Deputy Speaker:** Are there any reports of committees? Petitions.

## PETITIONS

### Petition No. 5 — received

**Clerk:** Madam Deputy Speaker and honourable members of the Assembly, I have had the honour to review a petition, being Petition No. 5 of the First Session of the 35<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, as presented by the Member for Watson Lake on November 1, 2021.

The petition presented by the Member for Watson Lake meets the requirements as to form of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

**Deputy Speaker:** Accordingly, I declare Petition No. 5 is deemed to be read and received. Pursuant to Standing Order 67, the Executive Council shall provide a response to a petition which has been read and received within eight sitting days of its presentation. Therefore, the Executive Council response to Petition No. 5 shall be provided on or before November 16, 2021.

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

## NOTICES OF MOTIONS

**Mr. Kent:** I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to hold a public meeting with residents of Golden Horn before the end of the 2021 calendar year to discuss the *Golden Horn Development Area Regulation*.

**Ms. McLeod:** I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Health and Social Services to commit to a date for holding a public meeting with the residents of Watson Lake to discuss continuing care in the community.

**Ms. Tredger:** I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to reduce barriers to accessing proof of vaccination for vulnerable people by waiving fees related to general identification cards.

**Ms. White:** I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to direct the Land Planning branch to support the Golden Horn development area regulation zoning committee by initiating further engagement with the Golden Horn community and property owners on possible zoning changes.

**Deputy Speaker:** Is there a statement by a minister?

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Clean energy legislation

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** One of our climate action commitments under *Our Clean Future — A Yukon strategy for climate change, energy, and a green economy* is to develop a new clean energy act. When enacted, the new clean energy act will be the territory's first piece of energy and climate change legislation. The clean energy act will legislate emission reduction and renewable energy targets. Legislating the territory's targets demonstrates the Government of Yukon's commitment to implementing *Our Clean Future* over the next decade and our commitment to address climate change.

The proposed legislation will provide the authority to regulate energy-related programs and products. It will also ensure long-term climate change accountability and transparency through public reporting as we deliver on *Our Clean Future* commitments. This new legislation will bring the Yukon in line with the most progressive energy and climate change legislation in North America. The proposed legislation also supports seven other commitments under *Our Clean Future* and will help us move toward sustainability that benefits Yukoners and the environment.

Last week, the Government of Yukon launched a public engagement on the clean energy act. We are seeking input as we develop this new legislation. We are engaging with industry, First Nations, municipalities, stakeholders, interested parties, and the public to discuss the proposed legislative framework and to identify any potential barriers or gaps.

A discussion document called *Creating a Clean Energy Act for the Yukon* is available at yukon.ca for review. In the discussion document, Yukoners will find the proposed implementation approaches for key provisions, including: greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, renewable electricity generation requirements, zero-emission vehicle sales targets, renewable fuel content standards, renewable heating targets, ability to set energy-efficiency criteria for products, and reporting requirements.

The proposed legislation will also grant the government the regulatory authority to develop regulations regarding mining emission targets. Intensity-based greenhouse gas reduction targets for the Yukon's mining sector are being developed through a parallel process that will include the opportunity for public comment. I also note that many of the targets and requirements being proposed in the Yukon's clean energy legislation were designed to achieve a 30-percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2010 levels.

In the spring of this year, we announced an increase to the Yukon's overall greenhouse gas reduction target to 45 percent by 2030. We will work with the newly established Yukon Climate Leadership Council to identify any additional actions needed to reach the 45-percent greenhouse gas reduction target. An accelerated decrease in the territory's emissions is possible and will be achieved by scaling up our current efforts in partnership with other governments, organizations, and citizens.

The additional actions that we take to reach the increased target will create new opportunities for both Yukon businesses and individuals, as we build a green economy in the Yukon, for the Yukon, by the Yukon. We are living in an era of transformation. We are seeing evidence of the climate emergency in our backyards and around the world. The proposed new climate energy act will play an important role in increasing access to renewable energy, helping Yukoners adapt to climate change, building the Yukon's green economy, and ensuring that the Government of Yukon delivers on its commitment as part of *Our Clean Future*.

**Mr. Kent:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to talk about the issue of energy here today. We appreciate the update from the minister.

As we enter the winter, I think that it is very important, though, that, as a legislature and as leaders, we reflect on the fact that we are in an energy crisis. As the territory grows, demands on our energy are increasing. Due to poor planning by the Liberal government, there does not seem to be any solution to address this shortage of energy beyond the rental of diesel generators.

During the recent appearance of the Yukon Energy Corporation in this Legislature, they stated that they project to be renting diesels at least until 2030. That is at least another nine years of renting dirty diesel generators. With the push to see more electric vehicles or homes switching to electric heat, and with new builds in Whistle Bend relying almost entirely on electric heat, the demand on this system will increase even further. If there were a major malfunction of one of our hydro

generation stations during a cold snap, we could see the real possibility of not having enough electricity to meet the demand. Further, we are seeing the Liberals go forward with a request to increase electricity rates by close to another 12 percent.

For those in the Yukon who rely on other sources of energy for their home heating, such as wood, oil, or propane, they are also seeing major storm clouds on the horizon. There is a shortage of firewood for home heating due to the Liberal government's inaction and inattentiveness. We have seen the price of wood skyrocket to almost \$500 a cord. Despite the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources' suggestions, scavenging the ditches for firewood is not a legitimate solution. Those who heat their homes with oil are seeing prices skyrocket, as the Yukon Liberal government was unable or unwilling to get an exemption to home heating oil from the carbon tax like the Northwest Territories was able to negotiate. Those who use propane were shocked to see recent headlines in the *Financial Post* that read — and I quote: “Canadian propane prices surge 300% — and could climb higher as US markets brace for ‘Armageddon’”.

All of these energy issues that the Liberals have ignored and sometimes even contributed to are making life more difficult and less affordable for many Yukoners. We need urgent action to ensure that we have consistent and reliable backup energy, and we need that yesterday. We also need the government to take action to ensure that our energy and heating options are affordable.

**Ms. White:** We are, of course, very happy and proud to see this legislation moving forward. Yukoners have been clear. At the doorsteps, in petitions, and at climate rallies, they have told us that we cannot waste time. We are in a climate emergency and we need to act now, decisively.

With Yukoners who fought for climate action in mind, the Yukon NDP negotiated for an ambitious 45-percent reduction of greenhouse gases, and we won — 45 percent is the target that will be legislated.

I have read the questions that the Yukon government has put forward as part of their consultation, and I have some feedback that I would like to provide.

The first question is about the framing of the legislation, about the objectives that this legislation is trying to achieve. I would strongly recommend that the Yukon government look to the work done by the Yukon Youth Panel on Climate Change. I would like to quote their work: “The Yukon Youth Panel on Climate Change prioritizes reconnection and sustainable relationships with the land and people to ensure that social and economic systems are based on reciprocity and supported by ecological integrity. Overall, this results in a changed mindset and way of living to sustain a healthy planet.”

Climate action is not just about quick technological fixes. Yes, we need renewable energy. Yes, we need zero-emission vehicles, but we also need reconnection. We need to prioritize sustainable relationships with the land and people.

It is also important to discuss the plan for intensity-based targets for mining. This is the wrong approach. The climate doesn't care about intensity targets. At the end of the day, what

matters are total emissions. If total emissions go up, it doesn't matter how efficient the technology was; it is still making our climate crisis worse.

It is also important to talk about what is not captured in the legislation and the targets that will be legislated. One of these is the destruction of ecosystems. When naturally occurring carbon sinks are disturbed, they release significant amounts of carbon, and this isn't captured or accounted for in our targets. This needs to be considered as we make decisions about land use. For example, allowing mining in wetlands — this action will have climate impacts, and we need to consider that carefully.

To wrap up, I would like to again express our pride and excitement about this legislation moving forward. I have identified some concerns and shortcomings, and I would like to offer to work collaboratively with the government to address them so that the Yukon can lead the way in climate action.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** First of all, we are in a climate emergency. We have declared it here in the Yukon, but so has Canada, so has the City of Whitehorse, so has the Council of Yukon First Nations, and so has the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.

Right now, the Conference of the Parties meetings are taking place — the international meetings in Glasgow, the 26<sup>th</sup> set of meetings to talk about climate change — and the conversation is about being in code red — that humanity has caused this problem and we need to change it and solve it. We need to address it.

I would like to echo the comments from the Member for Whitehorse Centre. We cannot waste time. Yukoners want action; they want us to act.

I think that it is critically important that we enshrine our commitment to climate change and the climate crisis and to make sure that we are on the right side of history by enshrining it in law.

I am a little surprised to hear the Official Opposition talk about diesel backups. The Member for Copperbelt South talked about the importance of having a backup, but then said: “But we don't want diesels.” I think what he said was: “We don't want rented diesels.” Well, the proposal from the Official Opposition is that we actually invest in fossil fuels and that we build diesel plants. The whole idea that they have is that we would create a long-term dependency on those fossil fuels. The backup is for backup right now, and that is what the point is. Yes, I know that the price of oil is going up — that is why we want to transform the energy economy to a renewable energy economy. That is the whole point.

I will note that when the Leader of the Official Opposition was the Minister of Environment, he said — and I quote: “We don't think setting a territory-wide emissions target is the right thing to do.”

Well, I am very happy now that all parties in the Legislature have said that they have endorsed *Our Clean Future* and the 10-year renewable energy plan, but the 10-year renewable plan doesn't include building a fossil fuel plant, so I disagree with that.

I will say that there are many things that we are working on right now, and we will have the chance to debate and vote in this House about bringing in better buildings legislation to try to improve the energy efficiency of our homes and our commercial spaces. That is a great opportunity, because what it does is reduce the need for energy in the first place, and so it is a win all the way around.

We are talking about batteries, which First Nations are investing in, that will make our renewables go further. We are talking about wind and solar. We are building charging stations for electric vehicles from Watson Lake to Dawson City, so there are a lot of projects that are underway right now. We are very happy that we are working for Yukoners because we believe that this is the era of transformation and we are ready to get down to work. We want to make sure that it is the law that any future government will uphold these targets.

**Deputy Speaker:** This then brings us to Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Physician recruitment and retention

**Mr. Dixon:** Over the course of the last few sitting days, we have been asking the Minister of Health and Social Services to provide some semblance of a response to the thousands of Yukoners who are currently without a family doctor. Instead, what we've heard from the minister are non sequiturs and unrelated facts. The minister has told us about the medical travel subsidy, we have heard about specialist clinics, we have heard about orthopaedic surgery, but none of that has anything to do with family medicine and the thousands of Yukoners who are without a family doctor. One fact that she did provide that was actually useful was that, according to her, 21 percent of Yukoners are without a family doctor.

Can the minister provide Yukoners with a single concrete example of something that this Liberal government is doing to attract family physicians to the Yukon and help address the thousands without a family doctor?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Our government is aware that one local physician has closed their primary care practice. We have recognized this as affecting Yukoners and their ability to have a walk-in style clinic. The *Putting People First* report, as I have said recently, reports that approximately 21 percent of Yukoners do not have access to a family physician. This is a concern — absolutely. We have accepted all of the recommendations of the *Putting People First* report and take the priority to ensure that Yukoners have access to primary health care services.

We recognize that Yukoners have questions and concerns about how they will be able to access primary care. As part of the implementation of *Putting People First*, we are moving forward with adding more nurse practitioners, expanding access to virtual care alternatives — Madam Deputy Speaker, these are the examples that the member opposite has asked for — more nurse practitioners, expanding access to the virtual care alternatives, and exploring options for primary health care reform.

We continue to meet regularly with the Yukon Medical Association to discuss the primary health care services and physician recruitment and retention.

**Mr. Dixon:** In that whole response, the minister couldn't point to a single concrete action that this government is taking to attract family physicians to the Yukon — not a single concrete answer was she able to provide there.

Last week, when we asked for the minister to reverse the decision of the former minister and to reinstate the physician recruitment officer position, she said — and I quote: “The answer to that question is yes...” However, yesterday she refused to confirm if what she said was true.

So, can the minister confirm: Has she reinstated the physician recruitment position that was terminated by the former minister, or did she once again share inaccurate information with the House?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** The Department of Health and Social Services has been exploring opportunities to contract nurse practitioners to serve some existing clinics and add additional patient access for patients to medical care. Additionally, work is underway to expand the virtual physician services as have been done during COVID and should continue. The department has also been working to assess options for working with a professional recruiter or recruiting firm. We have, despite the physician recruitment position, been actively recruiting physicians. I should note — I think yesterday there was a comment that Yukon is not an interesting place for physicians. I think that is completely inaccurate. Physicians thrive and are very appreciative of the opportunities that exist here in the territory. I said earlier that physicians are often attracted here because the rates that they are paid are equivalent to those in British Columbia plus 30 percent. That is a significant opportunity for us to recruit physicians and to retain them.

**Mr. Dixon:** The minister has tried her best to explain this away. Yesterday, she tried to explain that this was a national or even global problem, and while there is a shortage of medical professionals in the country, what is not a national issue is that the Liberals have given up on recruitment efforts. It was the Liberals who made the decision to eliminate the position that was tasked to lead this work. They made the decision to ditch Yukon MD website, and they still don't have a robust locum program to help fill in the coverage gaps. They can try to blame others and try to pass the buck, but the reality is that, rather than increasing efforts to recruit family physicians, they have actually cut those efforts. We have an acute shortage of family doctors, and the government has never done less to attract family doctors than they are doing right now.

When will the minister start taking this issue seriously and start actively recruiting family doctors to the Yukon to help the thousands of Yukoners without a family doctor?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I truly believe that, as MLAs, we have not only the opportunity but the requirement and responsibility to present accurate information to Yukoners. That is not what is being done here.



The Department of Health and Social Services has been working closely with the Yukon Medical Association to discuss feasibility and partnering on a new physician recruitment and locum coordinator. This is work that is being done as we speak. It shows a priority for our government with respect to recruiting and retaining physicians. Physician practices are private businesses that oversee their own recruitment and locum coverage. We endeavour to support them during that process by the incentives — financial and otherwise — of living here and working here in the territory.

Initially, between January 2013 and March 2015, prior to our party coming into power, the department had one FTE physician recruitment and retention officer who provided support to identify opportunities for physicians. We are exploring returning that.

**Question re: Obstetric and gynecological care**

**Ms. Clarke:** I have now asked the Minister of Health and Social Services several times what she is doing to reduce wait times for gynecologists. However, she continues to give answers that do not address the issue. We have pointed out that there is a year-long wait time for OB/GYNs, and she told Yukoners not to worry because they are giving away free period products or expanding midwifery. While these are nice, they do not address the issue that there is a year-long wait-list for OB/GYN services in the Yukon.

Can the minister tell us a single thing that she is doing directly related to reducing the wait-list for gynecologists?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I certainly can point to our government's commitment to expanding access to maternal, prenatal, reproductive, and sexual health care. Obstetricians and gynecologists provide a range of support to pregnant individuals, including during birth, as well as a number of reproductive and sexual health care services.

In total, the Yukon is supported by two obstetricians/gynecologists who are based in Whitehorse at the Whitehorse General Hospital. Yukoners must be referred there by another caregiver. The wait time is approximately 10 months, but, of course, wait times are triaged according to the level of need, with the most urgent care needs being addressed first.

I will continue to answer the member opposite's questions in the second and third supplementaries.

**Ms. Clarke:** Yesterday, we pointed out that currently the territory is only served by a single obstetrician. If that single doctor gets sick, there will be no capacity for C-sections or other emergency pregnancy procedures. This will put women and babies at risk.

Yesterday, I asked the minister what she is doing to address this very real and serious issue. Her response was to point to the expansion of midwifery, which, of course, does not address this issue of not having the capacity for C-sections at all.

What is the government's plan to expand the OB/GYN program in the Yukon so that we are not at risk of being left without an OB/GYN doctor in emergency situations?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Yukoners are able to access a number of services that are provided by obstetric and

gynecological specialists. I should note that obstetric gynecologists are highly specialized care providers who require dedicated clinic space and resources. Outside of Whitehorse, there are no communities in the Yukon — that is no surprise to anyone — equipped to hold such an obstetric unit, so they are based here in Whitehorse.

Based on the small number of births here in the Yukon each year, there are challenges with recruiting such specialized care providers for the Yukon and the cost of operating these specialized units. Offering an obstetric program in any other community is not possible, but the Yukon is well-served by the obstetric and gynecological services that are provided here.

Additionally, there are a number of private clinics in Whitehorse that deliver sexual, reproductive, maternity, and prenatal care. My colleague opposite has dismissed the opportunity for individuals to have services of a midwife. That is certainly something that a number of Yukoners will want to choose when that program starts.

**Ms. Clarke:** It is clear from the minister's answers over the last several days that she is not entirely clear about the important and critical services that obstetricians and gynecologists provide the community. We have asked several times for her to expand the program and she points to providing free period products or expanding midwifery. Those are great policies, but they do not address the critical and serious issue that we are raising. We have a shortage of gynecologists and obstetricians in the territory. The wait-list is over a year.

What is the minister doing to deal with this right now?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Yukoners are able to access a number of sexual and reproductive health care services through the Sexual Health Clinic and the Women's MidLife Health Clinic that operate here in Whitehorse. They are supported by two nurse practitioners contracted by the department. Additionally, the Crocus and Sage maternity clinic in Whitehorse provides maternity services and prenatal supports. This clinic is supported by a group of physicians who specialize in maternity care. Our highly trained community nursing staff are available to provide a range of maternal, prenatal, and postnatal supports and education through community health centres.

Our government continues to work closely with the Yukon Hospital Corporation to discuss shared priorities, areas of concern, and plan for the future of a service delivery here in the territory. The obstetrics and gynecologists' highly specialized team here in the territory serve pregnant people well. There is an opportunity to make sure that there is proper coverage through that clinic. The Yukon government supports the expansion of these services — which include midwifery, by the way — and include others at the sexual health clinics to provide service.

**Question re: Old Crow water delivery**

**Ms. Tredger:** In Old Crow, drinking water is delivered by truck to each home, up to three times per week. Due to the housing shortage, many homes are overcrowded. This means that the water tanks are too small for the number of people living there. Citizens know to conserve water to make it last,

but still, it is not rare to have a home run out of water — sometimes for days at a time. Let me repeat this: We have a community in the Yukon where people don't have consistent access to running water.

What is the minister doing to fix this unacceptable situation?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I am glad to field the question this afternoon on safe drinking water in our rural Yukon communities. It is an issue that we have to address and I will get more information for the member opposite.

**Ms. Tredger:** Perhaps I can provide some of that information. Because of staff shortages, the two main water delivery staff have had to work almost non-stop. They work long hours and can hardly take vacation. They are often on call long after their shift has ended just to keep up. This situation is obviously not sustainable. The workers are tired; they need a break.

On August 5, the minister replied to a letter from my colleague, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, saying that his department is working to provide training opportunities for local residents in Old Crow. Can the minister tell this House when training will start on the water and waste delivery for Old Crow residents?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I do remember the letter that I wrote to the member opposite in response to her question. I will follow up with my department officials and see where that program is at right now.

**Ms. Tredger:** I appreciate that the minister will follow up, because the current staff need long-term support and the community needs solutions that will attract local interest in these positions and retain workers. This ongoing staffing shortage has a direct effect on the community. This is a Yukon community where people have to prioritize water use or risk running out altogether. Water is a vital source of life that we take for granted when we don't have to worry about running out. It is 2021, Madam Deputy Speaker, and indigenous communities deserve better.

Does the minister have a plan to provide long-term reliable access to water for the residents of Old Crow?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I appreciate the question from the member opposite. This is, of course, an issue of national importance, an issue of regional importance, and an issue of local importance. We have advanced nearly 100 community infrastructure projects across the territory since 2016, valued at more than \$690 million in shared investment by the Yukon government and Canada, with Canada contributing approximately \$488 million under the Investing in Canada infrastructure program.

Community infrastructure is the backbone to our modern lives. It provides the water, the sewer, and other municipal services used by Yukoners every single day — every single day, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Community infrastructure also includes public service spaces for gathering and recreation that enable Yukoners to live healthy and active lives. We do our best to meet the needs of communities, recognizing that the infrastructure gap and desires far exceed the available funding. As we advance

priorities, we are also working with our federal colleagues to maximize contributions to the Yukon with as flexible terms as possible to better meet community and territory-wide priorities. Be it in Old Crow, Watson Lake, or Ross River, we are working on all of our community infrastructure.

#### **Question re: Magnetic resonance imaging program**

**Ms. McLeod:** The MRI at the Whitehorse General Hospital is an essential and critical health service for Yukoners. However, currently there are 650 people on the wait-list for non-urgent MRIs. Can the Minister of Health and Social Services tell us of anything she's doing to reduce this wait-list?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** The MRI service that's provided by Yukon hospital to Yukoners throughout the territory is an important and essential service with respect to how Yukoners can be diagnosed and have additional health information for their own decision-making. As a result, the current MRI program is being run by individuals who are experienced and necessary for the purpose of operating the MRI. As a result, Yukoners are served well in that capacity.

We are exploring options with the Yukon Hospital Corporation with respect to expanding the opportunities by having additional operators and extended hours of time that are possible for Yukoners to have MRIs and to reduce the wait times.

**Ms. McLeod:** The wait-list for non-urgent MRIs is 650 people, as I said. This means that the average wait time is now 332 days, and that's just under one year to get an MRI. What new funding is the Liberal government providing the hospital to reduce this wait time?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Madam Deputy Speaker, these are decisions made by the Yukon Hospital Corporation with respect to MRI operation and the service that they provide very well to Yukoners for those who need MRI diagnostics. The work continues every day on issues that affect Yukoners' health that are operated by the Yukon Hospital Corporation. Our continued work together will have conversations and will enable us to consider each and every one of the services provided. To be clear, those decisions are made by the Hospital Corporation. Certainly, I meet regularly with them and have the opportunity to talk about how we can improve services for Yukon. It's always something that we do together.

**Ms. McLeod:** Of course, it is the minister's responsibility to work with the Hospital Corporation to ensure that Yukoners receive the services that they require. Waiting a year to get an MRI will have a negative impact on the quality of life for the 650 Yukoners who are on that wait-list.

The minister has made a reference that she is working with the hospital to expand services. Can the minister give us some indication of the timeline and the cost?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I certainly will look into the wait times that are being expressed here in the Legislative Assembly and the number of individuals who might be waiting. I say that I am going to do that because certainly inaccurate numbers came from the opposite side on other issues today.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Deputy Speaker:** Order. The member has the floor.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. So, as a result, certainly we'll look into that. I cannot produce for the member opposite today a budget or a timeline. Those are decisions made by the Yukon Hospital Corporation. This government will continue to work with the Yukon Hospital Corporation as a vital partner in the delivery of services to Yukoners and always with the concept of trying to improve those.

**Question re: Yukon Hospital Corporation funding**

**Mr. Cathers:** As you know, this Liberal government has a record of neglecting the needs of our hospitals. The Yukon Hospital Corporation's annual report for the last fiscal year has now been tabled.

Once again, it shows that the Liberals have neglected their funding, leaving Yukon hospitals short millions of dollars for the last fiscal year. Total expenses for the Yukon Hospital Corporation, as shown in the annual report, were \$103.6 million while total revenue was only \$99.6 million.

Will the Minister of Health and Social Services tell us what, during a pandemic, the government's excuse is for leaving our hospitals short millions of dollars?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** This is an important question for Yukoners. It happens to have been, unfortunately, taken out of context.

In the first supplementary estimates for 2021-22, we are providing the Yukon Hospital Corporation with approximately \$85.8 million — it is actually \$85,761,000 — which includes an increase of \$206,000 in additional funding to cover interest payments on a letter of credit to meet the Yukon Hospital Corporation's pension solvency needs. I am happy to answer more as we go forward.

**Mr. Cathers:** With all due respect, that excuse from the minister is ridiculous. It is in the hospital's annual report. It's not out of context; it's in their report. We have seen the government balloon spending under the minister's department this year, but our hospitals are left short of money again.

For most of the Liberal government's time in office, the Yukon Hospital Corporation has been short of money. Annual increases are often less than the rate of inflation, despite the increasing costs of everything from personnel, drugs, medical imaging, lab, and the list goes on. Twice during this pandemic, our hospitals have finished a fiscal year with a multi-million-dollar funding shortfall thanks to the neglect of the Liberals. They did it to them in the fiscal year ending March 2020, and they did it to them this year again.

Over 2,000 Yukoners have no family doctor and are forced to go to the emergency room when they need a doctor. How does the Minister of Health and Social Services expect our hospitals to be able to manage when she leaves them short millions of dollars?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** As I said earlier — and as I think I said yesterday — it behooves the members of this Legislative Assembly to provide accurate information to Yukoners. To not do so, I think, abdicates responsibility.

Between the fiscal years of 2015-16 and 2021-22, the Yukon hospital services O&M budget has increased by

35.4 percent when we compare the mains to the mains. Our government is committed to working closely with the Yukon Hospital Corporation to ensure that we are meeting their core funding needs.

The overall increase of five percent — or 5.44 percent or \$4.2 million — over the 2020-21 mains has been the funding from the first supplementary estimates. This includes an increase of core funding of four percent for growth and cost-of-living adjustments. This increase also includes \$1 million for security and safety enhancements at the Whitehorse General Hospital secure psychiatric unit, which is in addition to their core funding.

Between the fiscal years of — thank you. I will stop there.

**Mr. Cathers:** When the minister talks about bringing accurate information before the House, I will remind her that she tabled the hospital's annual report. It's right from there that we see this funding shortfall.

It's clear that the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Premier are both out of touch with the needs of Yukoners. As a result of the Liberals cutting recruitment for doctors, thousands of Yukoners who have no family doctor are forced to rely on our hospitals and the emergency room in lieu of a family doctor.

Our hospitals are dealing with other increasing costs across the board. When the hospital CEO last appeared in this Assembly, he told us — and I quote: "... this past year, almost every ambulatory and inpatient service increased by greater than, say, three percent. Some of them are up to possibly 10 percent. That is something that we will have to work with government on to ensure that our core funding — our base funding — keeps pace with what we see as far as increases."

How does this government justify their decision to leave our hospitals short \$3.9 million, according to their own annual report, during a pandemic?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I would like to note that capital funding for the Yukon Hospital Corporation has also been provided for a total of \$7.7 million in the 2021-22 budget, and that is in addition — the hospital receives funding for their COVID-19 needs, which is included in the COVID-19 budget. I think that it's important for Yukoners to know this.

I have already noted, but it's worth repeating, that between fiscal years 2015-16 and 2021-22, the current budget year, the Yukon Hospital Corporation has received an O&M budget increase of 35.4 percent when we compare mains to mains. As a result of these increases, the Yukon Hospital Corporation has been able to offer additional services here in the territory. Yukoners now have better access to orthopaedic surgeons, to MRIs, and to pediatricians, and bringing care closer to home is an important priority for this government. We will continue the work with the Yukon Hospital Corporation, and we will do so on behalf of all Yukoners.

**Deputy Speaker:** The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I move that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

**Deputy Speaker:** It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Deputy Chair (Ms. Tredger):** Order, please.

I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

The matter before Committee is general debate on Bill No. 9, entitled *Act to Amend the Cannabis Control and Regulation Act (2021)*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Deputy Chair:** Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

*Recess*

**Chair (Ms. Blake):** Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

### **Bill No. 9: Act to Amend the Cannabis Control and Regulation Act (2021)**

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 9, entitled *Act to Amend the Cannabis Control and Regulation Act (2021)*.

Is there any general debate?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** First, I would like to welcome the officials this afternoon. With me is the director of policy and communications with the Yukon Liquor Corporation, Amelie Quirke-Tomlins, and Andrea Bailey, legislative counsel with the Department of Justice.

We had second reading on the proposed bill, and we can now continue the debate here in Committee of the Whole.

As we discussed at second reading, the proposed amendment to the *Cannabis Control and Regulation Act* is very brief. The details of how e-commerce and home delivery will function is to be set out in the regulations — those under development. The change to the act that we are examining today allows a person to receive cannabis from a licensed cannabis retailer for the purposes of e-commerce delivery. This amendment, together with the regulations, will ensure that the Yukon's private retail e-commerce system can combat the illicit market more effectively. The aim is to establish a system that matches, as far as it is possible, the convenience of the illegal market while maintaining health and safety standards.

Public engagement at the time of legalization indicated support for online sales and home delivery of cannabis. The Yukon's licensed retailers have done an outstanding job serving our community since legalization. They have adjusted their business operations throughout the pandemic as far as possible

within the requirements of the legislation. It is now time to take the next step in this evolving industry and to develop legislation that authorizes our licensees to offer remote sales with home delivery. This will help them to better serve their customers while strengthening their business operations.

I look forward to discussing the bill further with Committee members.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate that from the minister. We did have a chance to raise some issues and have some amount of discussion at second reading, so I would like to return to a few of the issues that were discussed there, both by the current minister and the former minister, in relation to this bill.

I think that it goes without saying that we are supportive of the bill and that we are happy to see the development of e-commerce. We, of course, have been pushing for this for some time prior to the bill being tabled. This was available to retailers previously under an emergency order of CEMA whereby, for a fixed period of weeks, retailers were able to offer their products online. Of course, that ended earlier in the year with the termination of that ministerial order — or that regulation under CEMA, which allowed it. This bill seeks to make that opportunity permanently available.

I would, however, like to raise a few questions about some aspects of the cannabis legislation and regulatory framework overall and perhaps ask the minister why they were not included in this bill. Obviously, the department and the minister took some time to advance this, and they made the decision to pursue this one particular aspect and decided not to proceed with a number of other changes that could have been made.

I am curious about some of those decisions, so I will start with one particular issue that I have heard from a number of retailers, and that is in relation to promotion and sponsorship. Cannabis retailers are sometimes asked to sponsor local events. Any number of local events happen in the territory that private sector operators have the opportunity to sponsor. I know that for liquor businesses or bars, they are frequent sponsors of sporting events, school events, and the list goes on.

However, those kinds of promotion and sponsorship opportunities are not available to cannabis retailers. I would like to ask the minister: Was any consideration given to provide for legislative changes to allow for the types of sponsorship and promotion that are available to some businesses in the Yukon but are not available to cannabis retailers?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I think that, first and foremost, it is important to touch upon what our goals are with our process today. This is what, I guess, many would call a surgical amendment. We are really focused on prioritizing the conversations with the private sector and the work that we will continue to do to ensure that they have the best possible climate in which to undertake their businesses.

Our focus was really to go out and have the consultation piece and have discussions. The folks at the corporation have done a great job of continuing to have a lot of conversations, and the Leader of the Official Opposition, from the briefing, would know that there are so many touch points. Almost on a weekly basis, individuals in our organization are having conversations with the retailers. That is because we want to be

very respectful of the hard work that the private sector does. We want to be very respectful of their knowledge, ensuring that we can learn from them and improve this piece of legislation and how we support them, which is very important.

What is important to be aware of is that you have two sets of legislation that dictate what happens. We have the federal act that was put in place, and then the Yukon made a decision to follow through and put our own legislation in place. That's, of course, what we are amending today.

Certain things — sometimes there is the discussion around thinking that we have the responsibility or, at least, that we even have the powers to control that, but they may fall under a federal act. I think it goes without saying.

I wouldn't say that we, at this time, under this particular act, have everything exactly how the private sector would want to see it, but I think that we are doing a very good job of sticking to the commitments that were made from day one. I have to say — we get into strong debates, of course. That's what this Assembly is about, but at the same time, the previous minister came in and made a commitment. That good work was followed through by the corporation, and it was to enact — get that legislation in place — make sure that we have a proper governance structure and make sure that there was an opportunity for folks to access retail. That was done out of the gates from a government-owned store. Of course, there was lots of feedback from opposition. I mean, certainly there is difference of opinion here in the Assembly, but that commitment was to get that moving and to sell it off. Of course, that now has transitioned to a privately owned establishment, which we applaud. How we respectfully worked with the folks who were on the front lines for that store for the government was done as committed to, and now we are in a position where it essentially is primarily a private sector marketplace with a commitment from us to have it solely as a private sector marketplace.

I'm just going to touch on advertising and loyalty programs because it was something else that was touched on. I'm going to jump ahead a little bit and just touch on that.

So, first of all, the federal *Cannabis Act* has a range of requirements that licensees must follow, covering brand preference and promotion of information, brand elements on merchandise such as hats or T-shirts, and the display of cannabis and accessories at retail — inducements that might encourage non-users to begin using cannabis or that might encourage excessive or heavy consumption. Health Canada assess the compliance with the provisions of the *Cannabis Act* and its regulations relating to promotion on a case-by-case basis.

Under the *Cannabis Act*, benefits provided to members of a loyalty program cannot be provided again. So, we've heard locally where some of the national — there's one, I think, retailer that is part of a national chain of stores. We were made aware that there was loyalty program activity. I think that they reported back to the corporation. Of course, the corporation has followed up on that.

When it comes to loyalty programs, again, understanding that if folks see things such as that in place — that are not allowed to be in place — please let us know.

I don't want to solely say that the federal act doesn't give room for us in some sense — in cases where we may be able to look at a deeper dive and still be able to support some of the interests of the private sector — that is something, of course, that we are willing to do. I have spoken directly to those operators and they have some strong arguments. Inevitably, where these particular products have come into the marketplace and are looked at similarly to alcohol products — again, I think the member opposite makes good points. We do see some of our local entrepreneurs who are in the alcohol sector really contributing a lot to numerous activities through their corporate social responsibility activities.

My commitment today is that we are trying to make sure that the legal framework is followed but, at the same time, I will make a commitment that we will go back again and take a look at ways that we may be able to reduce the burden or take another look at the perspective of — if this is undue red tape that should be removed.

It was, right now, about us working, of course, with folks like Ms. Bailey to make sure that we can draft this and get a surgical amendment done to get this very important piece of legislation changed so we can see e-commerce thrive for the private sector.

**Mr. Dixon:** Just to reiterate, I appreciate that the minister has anticipated a future question that I have about loyalty programs, but my specific question was around promotion and sponsorship. If he could start by just addressing that first issue: Is the prohibition on the sellers of cannabis — cannabis retailers — to promote themselves by way of sponsorship similar to what we see from alcohol distributors or retailers a function of the federal *Cannabis Act* and subsequent regulations or a function of the territorial act?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Again, I just want to touch on the fact that what we have been doing, in any case, when we have heard complaints or concerns — as it was touched upon — is for us to go and address those — that is again to the loyalty program. I want to be respectful of the question as it is laid out.

I think that we have to do some work on our side to make sure that we look at each specific case in the same way that the federal government is looking at each specific case. It's hard to just define it that way, based on the interpretation of the federal legislation. There are some activities that would look at branding or promotion and that the federal entities would want to review. Once that is done, there is also an obligation that we have to cross-reference that against the legislation that we have.

What I am really saying today is — I'm making a commitment to the Assembly to go back and look at specific examples by all of our retailers right now who are looking to be in the sponsorship and promotion field. I certainly don't want to see folks who want to contribute to their community having a barrier to doing that if it's not there or can be appropriately changed.

Again, I think that it is a great point that was brought up today. I am willing to do the work on this side. As I stated, we

are in constant conversation. I will look to having a formal briefing with the corporation around aspects concerning sponsorship or community social responsibility programs that companies may want to have underway but feel that they can't because of what they are hearing from us or even the interpretation that is coming from the federal act.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate that answer from the minister and his commitment to seek a briefing from the department to look at that.

In the course of that briefing, I recommend that he have a look at the federal *Cannabis Act* and regulations, which outline permissible and prohibited advertising and promotional activities, and cross-reference that against what exists in the territorial legislation. From there, I am sure that he will find some opportunity to move forward. Once he has had a chance to have that briefing, I would be happy to discuss that with him further.

I will move on to the next issue, which the minister did begin to talk about — the loyalty program. It sounded, from what the minister has said so far, like the loyalty programs that are available to national retailers or franchises are not allowed in the Yukon.

Can he confirm that this is indeed correct? Loyalty programs that provide third-party and non-cannabis-related merchandise or gifts as a result of a customer's patronage are not allowed in the territory, or are they in fact permitted under our territorial legislation?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Loyalty programs are prohibited under current Yukon legislation. This rule applies to all licensees in the Yukon and is in place to prevent retailers from encouraging consumption, which is part of our program. Each jurisdiction has its own rules about loyalty programs. A cannabis franchise may be able to run a loyalty program in one jurisdiction, which is the case here. We have an operator who likely runs loyalty programs in other jurisdictions, but they are prohibited from having the program in the Yukon, the same as all Yukon licensees.

My conversations with the private sector — we see folks right now who may have just one outlet. Maybe they have a plan to expand into other parts of the Yukon. I am not aware of that yet, but as businessfolks, maybe they will make those decisions.

With this, we also want to make sure there is a fair playing field for Yukon businesses. We want to make sure that an organization that has multiple stores across western Canada, say, aren't being able to use these loyalty programs to have an unfair advantage.

When a complaint is received by the corporation — and we have had them about one of the organizations — regarding this type of activity, enforcement actions are taken. Licensees also need to comply with the federal *Cannabis Act*, which we touched on earlier. It has the requirements related to promotional products and inducements that might encourage non-users to begin using cannabis or to encourage heavy consumption.

I hope that answers the question. It's our legislation here that prohibits that. If there is any indication that such activity is

happening, please let us know and we will follow up with action.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate that. My intention today was not to flag a potential regulatory issue for the minister; it was to flag a potential opportunity for future legislative change.

The reason I say that is that, while I know our first instinct is to protect locally developed businesses, I also want to make sure we have the ability for our local businesses to explore and expand beyond the Yukon. For instance, if a local retailer were to want to use their Yukon retail shop as the launching point for a bigger chain, they need the tools to compete with other national retailers.

I know of at least one retailer in the territory who is considering opening shops outside the Yukon. By limiting their ability to access those sort of loyalty programs, they are at a competitive disadvantage when they go outside of the territory.

I appreciate the minister's comments. I guess I would just flag the issue as something that he should consider when reviewing future amendments to the legislation. I think that it's an opportunity, but we ought to think about the comparison between cannabis retailers and the alcohol sector. The alcohol sector has fairly permissive opportunities for promotions and loyalty programs, as we see — every time you crack open a particular kind of beer, you can get a T-shirt or those types of activities. There are lots of those types of loyalty programs that exist in other sectors. I think that cannabis should be given some of those opportunities as well as the legal cannabis market becomes normalized.

The next issue that I want to mention builds on that. Under territorial legislation, cannabis retailers are only able to offer cannabis and cannabis accessories in their licensed area. That is, they can't sell other goods in what we consider the licensed area. For smaller retailers in the Yukon, that means that they just don't have the ability to sell those other general goods without having to expand their area or get a second location.

I was wondering if the minister could comment on that and whether or not — the consideration of allowing other products in what we consider to be the licensed area within the Yukon.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I appreciate the comments concerning loyalty programs, just to step back there. I think there is opportunity there, of course. Anyone who is expanding into another jurisdiction will follow the rules in that jurisdiction. It goes without saying that absolutely — loyalty programs built on having individuals hit a particular store or franchise on multiple occasions in different jurisdictions and draw them in based on their commitment or whatever their connection or opportunity for benefit within their program — I hear that. The member opposite probably knows as well as anybody, too, that I appreciate that sometimes that approach — whether it is exemptions in the *Canadian Free Trade Agreement* — the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition negotiated well for Yukon — so even in a sort of laissez faire free-market perspective, sometimes we are taking a look at appropriately supporting our businesses.

That's not to say that, in future days, we can't look at taking legislation and, of course, making sure that we can support great Yukon businesses that are expanding and starting

to work, which we think is a fantastic endeavour, if there are companies, organizations, and businesses now that are seeing that opportunity, and the business planning that they are doing states that it is a sustainable and profitable opportunity.

Specifically, there are three things that I am really committing to. We have walked through and we have seen in particular stores — and some stores — you are right — have had that opportunity to have a bigger location, and so it makes it easier to sell the merchandise. I think that the commitment that I am making is that we are talking really about branding merchandise. That is the conversation where I'm saying that we are committing to go and have, with the retailers that we have — really looking at, one, are there ways for us to make it easier for them to sell their products while still following the federal guidelines or, from a federal perspective, are we going to have to make an intervention? I mean, we are already concerned at the federal level where we look at packaging. We think that packaging — we are over-packaging, and we are concerned about that. We think that there are ways, but, again, it is federally mandated.

But the commitment that I am making to the Assembly is around opportunities where folks want to get their branding out — merchandise — if there are easier ways to do that. I want to be very respectful of the fact that, although I understand that some of those merchants have limited square footage. Again, going to get extra square footage in a very competitive commercial real estate market may inhibit you from even putting your product out there because of the costs that are associated with even having that extra space to do it.

I think, again, I'm committed to going back and looking at where we can support folks to get their ancillary products out the door, reducing red tape, if there is red tape in place that doesn't need to be there but, all the while, being cognizant of the fact that we have to be very committed to our values around responsibility in how we also put the names and the branding of those organizations out there, all the while trying to make it consistent with what we do with organizations that are entrepreneurial organizations locally that are also producing alcohol products and how they play within the marketplace.

That is my commitment. We will sit with folks and try to figure out how we can make things better for them while being respectful to the legal framework that is in place at the national level.

**Mr. Dixon:** Thanks to the minister for that. I appreciate the commitment that he has made to review some of these issues, engage with local businesses, and consider further changes going forward.

The minister mentioned a few things that caught my interest, but I won't go into the CFTA and the cannabis table at this point, but I would note for the minister that he is in the unique position where he is both the minister of trade and the Minister responsible for the Yukon Liquor Corporation and the cannabis corporation, which I hope he uses to his advantage to advocate for some changes at the federal level through those national tables.

He also mentioned the federal legislation. I wanted to ask briefly if the minister is aware of the comprehensive review to

the federal *Cannabis Act* that's being contemplated by the federal government and is committed to begin in October 2021. Also, if he could provide an update for us as to whether or not he is aware if that has begun, and, if so, has Yukon government provided any feedback yet? If not, when will we provide that feedback to the federal government?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Health Canada runs a federal-provincial-territorial working group that we are a part of and, as part of its review of the *Cannabis Act*, the Yukon Liquor Corporation has attended two meetings so far and will continue to participate. I can go back to see if any interventions were made during the first two meetings of the working group. I would think that, from experience, probably it was project opening in, one, setting the agenda and setting the mandate and then, two, starting to do the work. My experience to date has been that the folks will come in and have a sign-off at the ministerial level. If they are looking for any particular mandate or intervention, that would be done at the table. I know that my mandate letter does identify a few things, one of which we are talking about today, but it is also our concern around the packaging.

Those items — they have already have support and a mandate to discuss, but if there is anything further, I can bring it back to the House and make the Leader of the Official Opposition aware of that.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate that response from the minister and the commitment to return to us with any feedback that may come based on the submissions that Yukon may or may not have made to the federal government on the comprehensive national review of the *Cannabis Act*.

By way of background, again for the minister, I think this is an opportunity for the Yukon — sorry, the comprehensive review of the federal act is an opportunity for the Yukon to make an overture to the federal government about the nature of the licensing for producers. Nationally, there are different levels of producer. One consideration may be for the burgeoning agriculture industry in the Yukon, that we consider the size of our market and the size of production that can occur in the Yukon and consider whether the level of burden that Health Canada's regulations put on prospective producers is appropriate to the Yukon, relative to our size, and the fact that we would have naturally smaller cannabis production here in the Yukon. The regulations, as they are set up currently, obviously contemplate very large production that can occur in the south, and so, I think that's something that the minister may want to consider.

My next question relates to the overall model. I've had a few discussions with the former minister about this, but I would like to chat with the current minister. Where are we at in terms of the markup and the pricing structure that the Yukon cannabis corporation employs? I've recently heard anecdotally that we had the highest markups in the country, but then more recently, I did hear that the cannabis corporation was either contemplating changes to the markup or had recently made some changes.

Could the minister update us on that?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** So, the Yukon Liquor Corporation — again, we’re consistently meeting with retailers. I know I’ve touched on that a few times. I think it’s important just to show the level of engagement and how active we are to understand the needs and perspective of the retailers and to review the cannabis pricing with licensees. What we have done already is that we’ve reduced the cost of service charges on products. That went live at the end of the month; so, just this past weekend, we’ve reduced that. We switched from a per-gram to a per-unit cost of service for some products. The cost of service dropped from \$14 to as little as \$2.15 on some products. So, we think our first step is to really reduce some of those charges that were in place.

Secondly, as the member touched on, the corporation has a markup on all products purchased by licensed retailers. This markup has not changed in the three years since legalization, and we are currently looking at whether the rate can be reduced. What we have committed to, right from the start, is being able to cover our costs with moving product. There might be a difference of opinion about how that model is looked upon. I would go back to the “what we heard” document. This was one of the most engaged processes we have seen on consultation — ever — in putting this act in place. It was astounding how many Yukoners wanted to be a part of that process.

What we did hear in the end is that, overwhelmingly, Yukoners wanted to see essentially a hybrid model from that “what we heard”. I think this follows through on that. If we go back and you see what Yukoners said and then you think about a model where it is direct to licensee, that’s not what the majority of Yukoners said; they wanted to see a program like this.

As Minister responsible for the Yukon Liquor Corporation, I strive to find an appropriate balance between the needs of licensees, social responsibility, and the need to return dollars to government to fund services for all Yukoners.

A continued reduction of the illegal cannabis market is a priority. Currently, our aim is to be as close to revenue neutral as possible. I want to make that commitment. That is the goal — as I sit with the president and our supporting staff — to get to the place of neutrality.

We are three years in, and for anybody who has been in a position of running a business, part of what we have been doing is understanding our costs. I am continuing to make that commitment to get to a neutral spot. What does that mean? It means that we want to ensure that we are not overcharging our licensees. To put that on the record, that is not what we are looking to do, but we are looking to be careful with this process and understanding and being respectful to the taxpayers of the Yukon and making sure that we follow through on what people wanted to see as the model and that we are sustainable in the expenditures that are part of the hybrid model, while being fair to licensees.

I would just close by saying we are very happy to be able to make such a dramatic drop in the costs for the private sector, and that all just went live on October 30, just a few days ago.

**Mr. Dixon:** Can the minister repeat what the cost-of-service fee is and whether it is per gram? I believe he said it

is two dollars and something, but can he repeat that, please, and indicate whether that is per gram or per some other unit of measure?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I had just touched upon an example, in one case, where we were looking at the reduction. We switched from a per-gram to a per-unit cost of service. For some products, the cost of service dropped from \$14 to as little as \$2.15. The cost of service — the current rate that was in place before October 30 was 50 cents per gram. We have now gone to a new rate, which for two grams is \$2.15 a unit — as well, for two grams equalling 50 cents per unit. So, for all other products, we’re charging 15 cents per unit.

Those are the changes we have just made. I can give you an example: Under the previous cost of service for a large format, such as a 28-gram bag, it had a cost-of-service charge to licensees of \$14. Under the new rate, the cost of service for a 28-gram bag is \$2.15.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the answer, and I will spend some time looking at the Blues to reflect on exactly what the minister said there, as I didn’t quite follow everything. I appreciate the overall reduction, in particular for that 28-gram bag from \$14 to \$2.15. I would also note, though, that the cost-of-service fee would not be necessary if the retailer could go directly to a producer, so that cost is on top of all the other costs that exist there. If a retailer were able to go directly to a producer, as opposed to through the cannabis corporation, that cost-of-service fee wouldn’t exist, so that is one thing to consider there.

That leads me to my next point, which is the question about whether or not to allow retailers to purchase directly from a registered and legal producer. I know that the minister has spoken about this. He said that, because of the public consultation that was conducted back in 2017-18, that is why we can’t make any further changes. So, that is where I would like to challenge the minister a little bit. Relying on the “what we heard” document from three or four years ago I don’t think is the best choice, just because opinions have significantly shifted — not only in the Yukon, but in Canada — about the nature of the cannabis industry and in particular the role of the legal cannabis industry in combatting the black market. I think that, if properly presented to the public, there would be support for at least consideration of a type of model that would allow retailers to go directly to a producer, should they so choose. I do appreciate that some retailers would like to continue to purchase through the cannabis corporation, because of their buying power, but I think that there is an opportunity, at least, for the consideration of another model — or different options, at least.

Perhaps I will let the minister respond to that, because I know that he has some thoughts on it.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I think that, in many cases, legislation is going to be looked at in a different way over time. We are a few years into this process, and we are having a good debate about opportunity, business expansion, maybe even increasing the GDP, depending on what happens here for production, and that is a different conversation than we were having with the opposition three years ago. I know that signals have been made



that this amendment will be supported, and I think that is a good thing. So, you are absolutely correct. We have transitioned in perspective immensely, not just in the Assembly, but across the country. Do I think, as time goes on, that we are going to see an opportunity for the model to change? Yes, potentially. I think that door could be left open.

But what I do know is that, in the last number of years, we brought this in, and what I would say to Yukoners is that the previous minister did a very, very good job of laying out the plan, committing to that plan, committing to the values of the plan, and having a corporation that worked in a very efficient and effective way to execute that.

What we saw when we asked Yukoners about sales and distribution — when it was overseen by government, so the same way that we see liquor — 28 percent of respondents thought that government-licensed, private distributors should oversee the managed cannabis distribution within Yukon; 24 percent thought that retail operators should be required to purchase wholesale from government suppliers; and 17 percent were in favour of government distribution to government-run stores, which is even more of a reach. When you take into consideration that, overwhelmingly — we are talking about almost 70 percent of folks wanting to see that, and then we had 24 percent saying that they thought cannabis producers should be allowed to sell directly to retail stores.

I think that is a fair comment. Over time, maybe as people get more comfortable — and they certainly have become much more comfortable in this short time. But at this particular time, I am just really focused on this amendment, but I am always open to hearing from the private sector. As things change, you are right — that would reduce the administrative cost, but this was something that Yukoners, for their comfort — as this industry is moving so quickly, changing, and maturing, it was key to see this. Even the bigger players that were producing are now reallocating their energies into research and development. The whole thing is moving so quickly, even in this short period of time, that I think it's prudent to be able to monitor for a short period of time and then see if that opportunity is there and what the private sector feels that they can do.

We know right now that we are in a position where we can carry a ton of buying power. We are in a position where we are able to house and store a tremendous amount of product. We have a lot of different interests.

I do get it. We have retailers who are saying, "Look, I would like to take a particular product and I want to be the only person who can sell that product, and that is what is really going to drive people into my store or, if this changes, we will be able to deliver that to folks." I do see that part of it and the strategy around it, but we also think that we are giving an advantage — being able to have the huge buying that we do have and that other opportunity. We have talked about this a lot. It is always difficult in public policy to get it exactly how everyone wants to do it, but I think that, with this one, the folks who drafted this, did the work, went out to talk to Yukoners, and then deployed it have done a very good job. That is not to say that there can't be improvements in the future.

**Mr. Dixon:** Was there any public consultation on this bill?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** No, we worked directly with our licensees and went back and looked at, I think, the most responses of any "what we heard" document that the Yukon government had experienced. That is how I remember it. I can go back and look. We went back to those original discussions, and what we heard from the private sector was to please get this done and get it done as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Dixon:** In the "what we heard" document, I would note for the minister that only 24 percent of Yukoners thought that retail operators should be required to purchase wholesale from a government supplier. If the minister is compelled by the numbers in the "what we heard" document, I would implore him to look at that and consider the feedback that Yukoners provided then.

That being said, I stand by my comments that I think that the minister should consider the significant shift in public opinion with regard to their viewpoint on the legal cannabis market and its role in our economy.

That being said, the minister mentioned the importance of the corporation remaining revenue neutral. That is something that he highlighted in his earlier comments as being very important. I noted that, in the report that was tabled by him earlier this session, it appears that we are in a surplus with the corporation. Can the minister confirm that the Yukon Liquor Corporation is in a surplus with regard to cannabis?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I just wanted to make sure that I had the right numbers.

We did. We had a surplus of just under \$200,000. This is what we're trying to monitor. We are trying to make sure that, as we are striving for a neutral position — and so again, new products coming in, understanding about storage, understanding about the cost that we have to incur within this model, and ensuring that we are being as fair as possible to the private sector.

We could have a debate on economic models. I think that the difference is — yes, there are pros and cons to it. What we have seen in this country, and in talking to business leaders across the country, what I'm hearing is — I get it. I know that there is a perspective to say, "Government, get out of the way of business and just let us do what we need to do." I think that a lot of very sophisticated business leaders have looked at what has happened in the last two years, as well, and understand the importance of government stepping up. That's why we are seeing a move for individuals within corporations to be part of their government relations at the federal level and seeing almost — extensive hiring when it comes to public affairs because of the importance around that relationship.

Again, here we are focusing on getting to neutral. There was a surplus this year. We are trying to get to a neutral place and still ensure that we are being very respectful to Yukon taxpayers.

**Mr. Dixon:** So, the minister is correct that the annual report notes nearly a \$200,000 surplus. Can the minister indicate what would happen to that money? Does it go back to

general revenue, or does something else happen with the corporation in this respect?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** It does; it goes back to general revenue. At this point, there are two drivers. One driver was that our freight costs were less than we had thought — so that was part of it — and our sales were higher. Both of those drove this particular cost. To be open to the House and accountable to the House — absolutely. It would go back to general revenue. We're going to continue to have our discussions with the private sector to get us to a place of neutrality.

**Ms. Tredger:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and I would like to also thank the officials for being here today.

My first question about this amendment is about the regulations. I was wondering if you have a timeline for when the regulations will come into effect.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I don't know if the House is going to be happy with my answer. We have requested to have this done as soon as possible. That is really where we are at. I apologize that I am not giving a week or a month. This is extremely important. We have reached out across departments to let individuals know that, so the commitment that we made is to just get this done as soon as absolutely possible, understanding that there are some big times and dates that could drive revenue off in the future that we will try to work toward.

**Ms. Tredger:** I would like to ask some general questions as we won't have another opportunity this Sitting to debate it. I don't disagree with the model of having a centralized location through which stores receive their stock. I have heard concerns about supply of specific products. Because they are coming through a central location and split up, there are not enough of some products for stores to meet their demand.

I wanted to flag this with you and wonder if that is something that you have been in discussion with stores about.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I thought that the Third Party was going to go after me on free markets, and I was going to be very confused. I think it is a good point. I haven't heard that, and I say respectfully that I will go back and make sure that we are distributing in a way that is appropriate and that we are making sure that folks have product.

I don't know, from time to time, if there is one particular line of product that is being sold in one store more than another — but I hear you. I haven't had that conversation, but I will ask our team to reach out and make sure that if there are particular lines of product —

I don't know what is happening on the supply chain at the national level with some of the producers — so making sure we can purchase it, number one, and make sure, as you stated, that we allocate in an appropriate manner that is respectful to all the licensees.

**Ms. Tredger:** I appreciate that answer.

I apologize if I missed this in a previous question, but is there a timeline for a full review of the act?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** There is a five-year time frame for review on the act, from its date of coming into place.

Just to let you know — one of the notes that I have from our officials is that we haven't had a problem in the last year on product. Now, if you have information that's different, please

let me know. I say that as a friendly gesture, and I will make sure that we go back and find out. Early on, we did have some of those problems. I think that we have remedied them.

Like many acts, this is at five years — that is what is written in — for a review.

I touched on the questions earlier that were tabled — where an opportunity may be to take a different perspective toward this, based on what Yukoners want and what we are hearing from the private sector.

**Ms. Tredger:** Thank you for that answer. I don't have any further questions.

**Chair (Ms. Blake):** Is there any further general debate on Bill No. 9, entitled *Act to Amend the Cannabis Control and Regulation Act (2021)*?

Seeing none, we will now proceed to clause-by-clause debate.

*On Clause 1*

*Clause 1 agreed to*

*On Clause 2*

*Clause 2 agreed to*

*On Title*

*Title agreed to*

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Madam Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 9, entitled *Act to Amend the Cannabis Control and Regulation Act (2021)*, without amendment.

**Chair:** It has been moved by the Member for Porter Creek South that the Chair report Bill No. 9, entitled *Act to Amend the Cannabis Control and Regulation Act (2021)*, without amendment.

*Motion agreed to*

**Chair:** The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 22, Yukon Development Corporation, in Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

*Recess*

**Deputy Chair (Ms. Tredger):** Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

### **Bill No. 202: *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22* — continued**

**Deputy Chair:** The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 22, Yukon Development Corporation, in Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

Is there any general debate?

### **Yukon Development Corporation**

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Deputy Chair, I would like to begin by welcoming colleagues to the Legislature to help us in answering questions today: Deputy Minister Justin Ferbey and

the chief financial officer, Blaine Anderson, from the Yukon Development Corporation.

First of all, I would like to thank members for the opportunity to speak to the Yukon Development Corporation's first supplementary budget for the 2021-22 fiscal year. There are basically two requests in this supplementary budget for the Yukon Development Corporation. One is an increase to the annual budget for the Innovative Renewable Energy Initiative, and there is a one-time increase to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure plan from the green infrastructure stream.

Let me just go over both of those quickly. The Innovative Renewable Energy Initiative, often referred to as IREI, was established in 2017 and provides funding for small-scale First Nation and community-led renewable energy projects in the Yukon. Eligible technologies include wind, solar, hydro, gasification, geothermal, and biomass. This initiative has already provided funding to 16 projects in communities across the territory. Half of the funding allotted to date has gone to Yukon First Nation governments and development corporations, nearly a third has gone to community-based businesses or a public utility, and the remaining amount has gone to municipalities.

Funding projects include: the Haeckel Hill wind project, which is being worked on as we speak; the Old Crow solar project, which was energized earlier this fall; the Teslin biomass project; and the Kluane wind project. IREI is contributing to the territory's *Our Clean Future* goals of establishing independent power production projects in all off-grid communities by 2030 and generating 97 percent of electricity on the Yukon's grid from renewable sources by 2030.

Funding for IREI is renewed annually through the main estimates. As was announced in a news release this past summer, the Government of Yukon approved an increase in the annual budget from \$1.5 million to \$2.5 million, so we are requesting the additional \$1 million to fund this year's project as part of the supplementary budget.

The Yukon Development Corporation is also seeking a one-time increase to funding allocated under Canada's Investing in Canada Infrastructure plan for two Yukon Energy Corporation projects already in progress. Invoice costs for both projects were less than anticipated during the 2020-21 fiscal year, largely due to COVID.

In this supplementary budget, we are seeking approval for \$3.323 million for the Mayo-McQuesten transmission line, and \$3.054 million for the grid-scale battery project. Both projects were approved for multi-year funding under the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan.

The Mayo-McQuesten transmission line upgrade is needed to improve power quality and reliability, improve public safety, and enable future growth around Mayo and Keno. Construction of the Mayo-McQuesten transmission project began in June of last year, and the new transmission line was energized in March 2021. Upgrades to the Stewart Crossing south substation are expected to be completed by the end of this calendar year. Total funding for the project does not change with this request. We are simply requesting that the funds be reallocated from last

year's budget to this year's budget, and the funding is 100-percent recoverable from Canada.

The grid-scale battery project will help reduce thermal generation by being able to store renewable electricity when there is low demand for it and then feed electricity into the system as demand goes up. In addition to being able to use less diesel and LNG, the battery will improve grid reliability and save the utility money.

To summarize our request, the Yukon Development Corporation is requesting an additional \$1 million for the innovative renewable energy initiative and an additional \$6.377 million for the two projects under the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan. I look forward to questions for the corporation today.

**Mr. Dixon:** Thank you to the minister for his introductory remarks; as well, thanks to the officials for joining us today.

Obviously, we had the chance to raise a number of questions with the witnesses from the Yukon Energy Corporation and the Yukon Development Corporation earlier in this Sitting; however, there were a number of questions that we weren't able to get to, so we would like to raise a few of those with the minister today. I would also like to build on some of the questions that I had asked of the corporation witnesses earlier. I know that the minister was intently listening to the questions that we had for the corporation, so I am sure he is very much aware of some of the issues I want to raise, so I probably won't provide as many introductory comments as listeners may need, but I hope that the minister will find my questioning sufficient to provide thoughtful answers.

The first question I have is in relation to the process by which projects are approved through the IPP process. I had a few questions of the corporations, a few weeks ago, about that. I think that the witnesses, at that point, recognized that this was a new process and that there were some growing pains and that some of the earlier projects that had gone through that process were sort of the guinea pigs for how this process is going to work.

But, in general, what I would like to ask the minister is: In working with those corporations, what steps are the corporations and the government willing to look at to increase the speed at which projects are approved and improve the efficiency of the process by which these projects carry through that process?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The first thing I want to say is that, overall, the uptake on the independent power producer initiative has been really strong. There has been a lot of interest from the community, and there has been good uptake generally.

I did listen, as the Leader of the Official Opposition noted to the witnesses, both to the questions and the responses from the Yukon Energy Corporation and the Yukon Development Corporation. I did hear the questions that he raised.

In general, the answer is that it is a new process, and with it, there are sort of two ways in which we are working to improve or streamline the process. The first one is informal. As the projects have been coming in and the work has been evolving, we see that there are places that are particular sticking

points, and there are efforts put on them to either inform applicants about where those challenges are and how they can help navigate that or if we can put more effort toward reducing the burden on those places. It's sort of a continuous improvement model.

The second one is, given that it is a new program, there is an intention to do a fuller review and to talk about how the process can be improved over time. There are some challenges. Some of those are solved through communication to make sure that, as people are applying, they are well aware of the issues that have to be navigated and to make sure that, when they connect to the grid, it is safe to do so and that everybody is aware up front. I think that is the place where most of the focus is going. It's not to necessarily cut any steps out, which would compromise the safety of those projects or the success of those projects.

I understand there is acknowledgement from the corporation that the process can catch some of the proponents off guard, so there are efforts made to make sure that understanding is clear up front so that everybody is well aware, as they enter into the process.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the minister's response. I will leave some of the technical questions that I asked of the corporation for now and focus more on the policy issues for the minister.

The minister has mentioned that it is a very popular program, and it has been well-subscribed. A number of projects are coming online imminently. Some projects are earlier in their nature, and there are some projects that are already online.

Is there an uptake limit on the IPP? Is there a point at which we can no longer take on new wind or solar independent power projects? If so, what is that uptake limit, and how close are we to achieving it?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** There is an upper limit on the current independent power producer program. It's 40 gigawatt hours, or 40,000 megawatt hours.

Currently — and there are a lot of caveats around this “currently” — if the projects that are in the pipeline were all realized, that we have either already energized or that are in the planning phases, and not counting things like Atlin or other large projects like that, but if we looked at what we have, there are 20 gigawatt hours now active or in the planning stages.

Now, typically not all of those projects come to fruition. Some of them — people come forward, they plan, they talk it out, and then they decide that, no, they're not going to make it for whatever reason. So, not every one of those projects is realized, but what I can say is, notionally, we're at around 50 percent of the upper bound.

The other thing I want to say is that this project was meant to be — we put an upper bound on it, as I understand it, in order to then re-evaluate it and see where we would go from there, but it has been very successful at getting projects onstream, especially solar projects.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the minister's answer there. The 40-gigawatt hour limit is one that I had seen in some material, so I'm happy to see that confirmed by the minister.

The minister, I'm sure, was listening intently when I discussed with the witnesses from the corporations the notion of carbon credits that are a part of the negotiation for the electricity purchase agreement between an IPP proponent and the corporation.

As he will recall, I had some back-and-forth with the witnesses about the nature of those carbon credits and whether or not they make sense to sit idly, as they do currently — remaining unused and with their potential untapped — or if they would be better placed in the hands of the proponents who are bringing them forward and creating those credits as a venue or way to reduce their capital costs and receive some compensation for those credits.

I would like to ask the minister a general question about that. I am sure that he has some thoughts on this particular issue so, rather than ask a pointed question, I would be curious to know what the minister's take is on that. Is he comfortable with the status quo, or does he think that there is an opportunity out there — that we could consider changing the way we allocate and monetize or don't monetize those carbon credits?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I thank the member opposite for the question. He did alert me even after the last session with the witnesses that he would raise this question again today. It is a very interesting question.

First, let me just explain — because it's kind of a new notion for folks — what a carbon credit might look like and how it might work. Suppose that you have someone who wishes to offset the emission of carbon into the atmosphere and, in so doing, they could reduce emissions themselves. What they could also do is that they could sell that reduction in emissions, because maybe there is another individual, company, organization, or government that is trying to reduce their emissions. They could say, “Well, we can't reduce our emissions, but what we're going to do is pay for someone else to do it.” So, the investment comes from someone else — or some other entity or group — and they get the credit for those emissions being reduced. It can work. It can be a complicated system, and it gets more complicated when we start to work outside of a jurisdiction.

What would happen, for example — if there were companies in Costa Rica that were trying to reduce emissions and companies in Canada decided to say, “Yes, I am going to buy those credits,” they invest in Costa Rica because there is an opportunity to reduce the credits. What is supposed to happen in that instance is that the emission reductions accrue in Canada, even though they happened in Costa Rica, and the reason is that the atmosphere is a global commons and that it would have the same net effect.

The challenge with all of this is the accounting around it; it gets very complicated. So, if you were going to enter into such an agreement, you have to be very careful to make sure how it is accounted for — that it is not doubly accounted for. We have seen challenges with this over the past decade as carbon credits have come onstream. Effectively, how I heard the corporations respond is that, while there is work happening to those credits, they are helping to reduce the emissions of the Yukon. How is that being paid for? That is being paid for in

this power purchase agreement through the independent power purchase agreement. This policy itself is setting out that we will buy renewable energy from independent folks, and those credits then accrue to Yukoners writ large.

The basic principle that the member opposite, I think, is asking about is: Are we leaving something on the table? Could we find another way to incentivize those projects from going ahead? I think that this is the important thing that he is asking about. But really, where that lies for us is in the power purchase agreement and the price we set. So, rather than trying to sell credits, could we increase the rate at which we buy that renewable energy? The way that Yukon Energy pays for the independent power producers for their renewable electricity that they put back on the grid — well, it is fixed, and the price is based on the last cost approved by the Yukon Utilities Board for Yukon Energy's thermal generation. So, that is how the process gets set up by which there is a price that is being paid.

What I said in earlier responses is that generally the whole program is pretty successful. I am happy to look at, with Yukon Energy and the Yukon Development Corporation, the success of the project — about how we can support projects to get a good price and how we incentivize them to bring their projects online, but I would caution us from getting into the carbon credit system, especially if those credits are going outside of the territory. We do take advantage of the reduction in emissions and that helps us in our overall.

What would happen if we started selling — I'm still asking departments to investigate, including the Department of Finance to advise us. We would have to say that these are the emissions we measured here, but we have to add something back on because we sold those credits Outside. It would get kind of convoluted. In principle, I think that it's the wrong way to go about supporting our independent producers; I think that we should look for other tools to support them.

**Mr. Dixon:** The corporation has signed an EPA — at least one. I believe one. Others are coming soon. What happens with the carbon credits right now? How are they accounted for now? There has been at least one EPA signed. That would include the contemplation of a credit for that carbon that has been displaced. How is that accounted for, and how is that tracked?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The corporation will check into exact details around the electricity purchase agreement and if there is some means by which things are accounted. What I can say is that, overall, we say: "Here is the Yukon. Here are our emissions." We work with a national body that then reports internationally to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, so there is a whole way in which we account for emissions. What we can say is that, overall, our emissions are reduced because we are bringing renewable energy on board and we are displacing fossil fuels.

**Mr. Dixon:** So, those carbon credits that we accrue over time — or certainly will accrue as this program gets more popular — represent an asset. There is a financial value to that. I am wondering if the corporation is adequately contemplating the value of those credits and reflecting them in any of their public reporting. I haven't seen any contemplation of the

carbon credits that they are taking on as a result of the EPAs that they have signed with independent power producers from renewable energy.

I know the minister said that he would get back to us, or that the corporation would get back to us, on that process, but to my knowledge, I haven't seen any contemplation of that issue by the corporation, certainly not in any of their public disclosures or their public comments. I stand to be corrected. If the minister can point out to me if that is contemplated — somewhere on a website or on a page that I've missed — I stand corrected, but to my knowledge, the corporation hasn't contemplated the financial value of those carbon credits as they would have fairly substantial value on the market. I wonder if the minister can clarify that for me.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I will say again specifically that I have never been briefed in any way — talking about how there is some additional value here and that there is some sort of bonus for the corporation because we have accrued these credits.

I will give a bit of an explanation about what the electricity purchase agreement states to make it clear for the record today. Again, I will turn back to the corporation to ask them if there is some way in which this is added up, accounted for, or valued. I just will leave it — because it's such a technical question, I will make sure that I get back with some sort of legislative return for the members opposite. Now, I will note that, in addition to other definitions, the electricity purchase agreement defines an environmental attribute as — and I quote: "... any credit, reduction right, off-set, allowance, allocated pollution right, certificate or other unit of any kind whatsoever whether or not tradeable resulting from or otherwise related to the reduction, removal, or sequestration of emissions at or from the Seller's Plant..."

If one were to look at section 4.5 of the electricity purchase agreement, it speaks to exclusivity, saying — section 4.5(a) states — and I quote: "Seller..." — independent power producer — "... will not at any time during the Term commit, sell or deliver any Energy (or related Environmental Attributes) to any Person other than Buyer under this..." — electricity purchase agreement.

Basically, what it's saying is that — it does say within the agreement that the reduction of emissions goes to the utility, having been bought through this power purchase agreement.

**Mr. Dixon:** When the corporations were in the House, I had a few questions about the relicensing of the Aishihik hydro plant. I noted at that time that some of the challenges facing that relicensing between the government, the corporation, and the First Nation have become somewhat political. I don't mean that in a partisan way; I mean that there is a political discussion between governments about this. I am wondering what role the minister has played in the Aishihik relicensing and whether or not he has had any discussions with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations about that project.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I will give a bit of background, and then I will respond to the member's question at the end. The existing water use licence for the Aishihik hydro plant expires at the end of the next calendar year, December 31, 2022. On

June 18, 2021, YESAB's designated office in Haines Junction issued its evaluation report on Yukon Energy Corporation's proposal to continue to operate the Aishihik facility after its existing licence expires. The report outlined a recommendation that Yukon Energy Corporation be permitted to continue to operate the Aishihik hydro plant until December 31, 2027, subject to 44 terms and conditions.

We have just recently issued the decision document on that, working with Fisheries and Oceans. To go back to the question that the member opposite asked, early on in my role, I did have some conversations with Chief Smith of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, but they were pretty high-level conversations about the process and how it had evolved up until that date. I believe that it was even before YESAB had issued their recommendation.

Since then, I have not had any direct conversations with Chief Smith. I know that the Premier has had the odd conversation with Chief Smith, but in general, most of the work has been happening at the departmental level, working through the recommendations with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

**Mr. Dixon:** I would like to move on to the Atlin project. Can the minister give us an update, from his perspective, on that project and whether or not the government has secured federal funding for that project?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I think the member opposite asked about the Atlin project — is that correct?

**Deputy Chair:** Yes.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Thank you. Just one moment, Deputy Chair.

The Atlin expansion project is an important part of the 10-year renewable electricity plan. Our hope is that it will provide Yukon Energy with another dependable source of renewable electricity that it can use to meet peak demands for power each winter and to meet growing demands for clean energy. One of the great things about the Atlin project is that it is dispatchable power — meaning that the power that we are going to get, or the power that will be sold to us, will be sold as winter power, which is when we need it most. So, it is a really good energy fit with us.

I should be careful to note that the project is led by the Tlingit Homeland Energy Limited Partnership, sometimes called THELP, which is the Taku River Tlingit First Nation's development corporation. We have an agreement in principle stating their intention to work together to eventually sign an electricity purchase agreement.

The member opposite asked about funding for the project, and what I can say is that there is ongoing work to support THELP in securing funding from the federal government. We are also in conversations with the Government of British Columbia, and so that work is ongoing. I don't have any announcements that I am able to give today, but I am happy to answer more detailed questions as they arise.

**Mr. Dixon:** Obviously, with a capital cost of around \$200 million, it is a very expensive project. The corporation was very clear that the project was not likely to be viable without substantial federal investment. I am wondering if the

minister has made any overtures to the federal government about investing in that project, and if so, how much money is needed from the federal government to make that project viable?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** What I will say is that conversations with the federal government have been ongoing — I am sure, even before I got into the role, but certainly since I've been there, I know that our department officials have been in touch with the federal government throughout.

We anticipate that THELP — the Taku River Tlingit development corporation — intends to invest some money into the project. We intend to invest some money into the project, and we are looking to the federal government to make up that difference. It is significant. We don't have a finalized number, but it's many tens of millions of dollars that I think we are looking for support from the federal government on the project.

I can also say that, when I have met with the previous Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and his officials, we were encouraged by their understanding of the project and their verbal support for the project. I think they see this as a very good project. It is a little bit complicated, because the jurisdiction that wants the power is outside of BC, so that adds a wrinkle for sure.

Late last week, the federal Cabinet was announced, so I look forward to speaking with Minister Wilkinson in his new role, specifically about the Atlin project. That will happen shortly, I believe. I can't give a specific number today, just to say we are looking for a significant investment from the federal government, and they have given us indication that they think this is a worthy project.

**Mr. Dixon:** So, the minister has indicated that the Tlingit Homeland business is going to invest — I believe the acronym is THELP — in this project and that the Yukon government is going to invest in this project and that the balance will be sought from the federal government. In order to make that request, we need to know how much we are putting in. How much is Yukon government going to be contributing to this project?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The exact amount of how much the Yukon government will put in is still being discussed — not only at the Management Board table, but also in dialogue with the federal government and in dialogue with the Tlingit Homeland Energy Limited Partnership.

What I can say is that we have identified this as one of our most important infrastructure priorities both internally, as part of our conversation, and externally with the federal government — identifying it as an important project. I will also say that there was a comment that I recall hearing in the Legislature — and it may have been the Leader of the Third Party who talked about it — but whoever it was, I will check back to attribute it fairly — it was talking about this type of project — the infrastructure for this project — whether that be the transmission line, et cetera — that is sort of like a public good. We want to invest in this for the good of the territory and not try to use the ratepayer as a way to cover the cost of the project.

That is how we are treating it. I'm not able to give a figure today, but I am able to say that we have prioritized this project,

and we are working closely with our counterparts to secure the funds overall for the project.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the minister's comment, but based on what the corporation told us last week, this is not a public good; it is going to belong to THELP. The generation asset and the transmission line from Atlin to Jakes Corner will belong to a private company, which is owned by the First Nation in Atlin, which is, of course, fine, but it is not like it is going to be a commonly owned piece of infrastructure. This is something that I presume they are trying to make a profit on, and I think that it is important that we understand what sort of numbers we are talking about, because this is an extremely expensive project; it is over \$200 million or thereabouts, according to the corporation. So, we need to understand what sort of ballpark we are in for the level of investment that Yukon taxpayers can expect to burden.

I would ask again if the minister has given any thought to what level of investment Yukon taxpayers would make into this project and whether or not it would come from the Yukon government, the Yukon Development Corporation, or the Yukon Energy Corporation. I ask that because any expenditure, of course, of the Energy Corporation would have to be reflected in the rates. So, has the minister considered that, and if so, what is the amount that we are contemplating investing?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** First of all, the type of investment we are talking about is not investment through the development corporation; it's investment from Yukon government. The purpose of that, as I just stated when I rose last time, is that we are not looking to try to put all of this onto rate. The infrastructure, in simple terms, would be owned by THELP up to about Jakes Corner, and then from Jakes Corner in, the infrastructure would be owned by ATCO; that is my understanding.

The way that this is working is like the independent power producer, where we will have a power purchase agreement, and that will be separate from the investment that is going in to build the project. In a similar way, we talked recently about the innovative renewable energy initiative — we talked about it in terms of the budget, because there is a \$1-million additional amount there. One thing that is going toward is the Chu Níkwän wind project up on Haeckel Hill. That is not going to be owned by the Government of Yukon; that's going to be owned by a First Nation development corporation. It's an investment they're making, but we are helping them with that investment.

We would also help with this investment, because we believe there is a really important piece of infrastructure that would come to the Yukon, or support the Yukon. As I noted, we think of this as one of our highest priorities. It's there; it's central within the 10-year renewable energy plan for Yukon Energy, and it makes great sense for the Yukon because we will get dependable winter power from it.

What I can say is that Yukon Energy and the Tlingit Homeland Energy Limited Partnership have signed an agreement in principle for the Atlin expansion project. Both organizations continue to work on details of the electricity purchase agreement for the project.

**Mr. Dixon:** So, the minister mentioned the Chu Níkwän renewable energy project. I think, on that one, we're very clear how much we're investing. The corporation told us a few weeks ago that we're investing \$13 million in that. That's coming from the Arctic energy fund, which of course is a federal fund. I assume that the Yukon government is adding to that investment as well.

But what I'm asking is: How much will Yukon taxpayers be investing into this project? I appreciate that the minister has indicated that the power purchase agreement is close to being signed, or has been signed, but I don't understand how the company can enter into a power purchase agreement without first understanding how much their capital costs are going to be and how those are going to be covered.

If the total capital cost is \$200 million, and they're only getting \$1 million from the Yukon government, how can they plan for that? Certainly, the government must have some sense of how much they're going to invest in this project. It's a massive project, and they're in negotiations for a PPA right now.

I would assume that we have some indication of what investment Yukon taxpayers could be making in this.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** What I think I said is that there's — we've signed an agreement in principle with the THELP, but we haven't yet developed the electricity purchase agreement. So, there are some balls in the air.

What I've also tried to indicate is that dialogue with the federal government and the British Columbia government are ongoing. I'm not wanting to state numbers here today, because they're not finalized. As soon as I am able, I would be happy to stand up with a ministerial statement or in some way reach out to the opposition and the public and say, "Okay, here it is. Here's the plan going forward."

It is a live negotiation right now, so I ask the indulgence of the Legislature that we let that negotiation happen in good faith, and I will report back as soon as I am able.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate that the minister is not able to provide a number at this point, so we will look forward to hearing what that is. Of course, it will be of great interest to the Yukon taxpayers — certainly — the level at which they are investing in this, because the range, at this point, is zero to \$200 million. Obviously, it could be anywhere in between there, so that's a fairly broad scope for Yukon taxpayers to contemplate.

I will move on though and ask if the minister can provide an update from his perspective on the Moon Lake project and where the corporation is at with regard to that particular project, as it was mentioned numerous times by the Energy Corporation when they were witnesses here earlier.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The Moon Lake pump storage project is another very important project. One of the reasons is, when we get to pump storage, we will be able to take excess summer electricity that we have right now, where we spill water at the hydro facility here and elsewhere — when that water is spilled, we are not getting any energy from it, because we don't need that energy. What we can do is take that energy, pump water back up, and store the energy at a site like Moon Lake.

Then it becomes winter power. Again, like the grid-scale battery, it allows us to improve every one of our renewable projects that we have on grid, so it just makes them all better. It allows them to become dispatchable when they need to be dispatched and backed up by Moon Lake otherwise.

Planning for this project is in very early stages. We started to have discussions primarily with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation but also the Taku River Tlingit First Nation and the federal government. We believe that government-to-government collaboration will be key to this project's success. I did have a brief conversation with Haa Shaa du Hen Dickson in Carcross last week. We talked about this project and we are looking forward to working with each other. It was just touching base, really, about where things are at. We discussed the importance of energy projects for the Carcross/Tagish First Nation.

**Mr. Dixon:** Does the minister have an idea of the general capital cost of the Moon Lake project?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Not at this stage. The way the corporation explains it to me is that it will really depend on the sizing of the project, so there are various ways — you could scale it larger or smaller. Until we have some of those important conversations, especially with Carcross/Tagish First Nation — but also do some additional preliminary engineering work — we can't yet talk about the scale and the cost.

**Mr. Dixon:** Given the extremely early nature of this project and the fact that, as the minister said, we don't have any sort of cost estimates — the conversations are at the extremely early stages — does the minister think it's realistic that this project would be producing power and supplying our grid with electricity in 2028?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** What I can say, Deputy Chair, is — I have to check the date to be sure, but I think that it may say "2029". I'm not trying to quibble about the year.

But what I am trying to say is that this is our working target. There is a lot of work to happen and there are a lot of pieces to resolve within that work, but the concept is pretty sound. We have been looking for a project where we could have pump storage. It is very important to the overall renewable strategy. What I think is critical is that we began with the conversation with the First Nation rather than the other way around — where we said: "This is the project we want to do. Please get on board." The First Nation was there at the beginning and a partner. I think that it is an important piece of this. I am not saying that the dates are concrete. What we have is a working plan and we are progressing toward it.

**Mr. Dixon:** So, does the minister think that the working target is realistic?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** When you look at a project of this type — an energy infrastructure project, a hydro project — I think that a 10-year horizon from planning to design to buildout to commissioning is a reasonable number. I think that there are, of course, many things that we need to do between now and then, and it is very difficult for me to try to project exactly what will happen, but it is a reasonable timeline. I feel that we will endeavour to make it happen, working with diligence on our side.

**Mr. Dixon:** The minister said that the working target is roughly a 10-year horizon from now until the project comes online. That puts us at about 2031. I know that YEC's current document suggests that the project will come on in 2028-29, which is, of course, in seven or eight years, depending when in that horizon it does come on.

The reason why I ask is — that project is what the corporation is relying on for the plan to get off of rented diesels. The plan right now is for us to rent diesels until 2028 when Moon Lake is supposedly — at least according to the documents that the Energy Corporation has published — to come online. The minister has now pushed that back a little bit to call it more of a 10-year window, but nonetheless, it is important — whether it is seven or eight years or 10 years, I agree that we don't need to quibble about the exact dates. Either way, we will continue to be renting diesels to fill in the dependability gap that the corporation has until this project comes on — at least according to documents that are online.

The minister's timelines for this are important because it means that, without this new generation, we won't be able to move away from filling that dependability gap with rented diesels. That is why I am asking the question, and that's what I want to understand — if this is a realistic timeline. This is a fairly massive project that we are talking about, and to suggest that it could come online in seven years or eight years, I think that is pretty ambitious, given where we have seen large hydro projects go in this country over the last number of years.

I know that the minister has had some further information given to him, so perhaps I will give him a chance to respond to that.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** When I was talking a moment ago about 10 years, I guess I was referencing it from the perspective of when the 10-year renewable plan came out, which I think is now a couple of years ago. I wasn't trying to suggest that we are getting to — when the plan came out, it was discussed as a 10-year project. I think that the 10-year plan itself is referencing 2030 as the overall timeline of the plan.

The point that the Member for Copperbelt North is making is correct. It is important that we get to these projects. I completely agree with him. I disagree with him — and I said so earlier today and I will say so again. We seem to have a dispute between us about rented diesels versus building a diesel plant. I did sit in here and listen to the witnesses from the Yukon Development Corporation and the Energy Corporation, and I heard Mr. Hall say that the levelized cost of capacity for rented diesels is about \$211 per kilowatt year and that a diesel plant, which we would build, is about \$212 per kilowatt year.

So, it's virtually the same, meaning that the cost to Yukoners, in terms of the physical cost of rented diesels versus a diesel plant, is the same. I don't know why we are arguing about it because, if you were to build a plant, the other thing that happens is that you have some sunk costs now in expecting that plant to last you decades. Then you start to get nervous when someone comes along and says, "Let's do this renewable project," and you say, "Well, no, because I have already invested in this fossil fuel plant."



As we are standing up here and saying that we need to get to zero emissions by 2050, we — all of us, all parties in this Legislature — have said, “Yes, let’s do that.” How do we then say, “And let’s build a diesel plant?”

I think that the solution is — and I’m willing to debate it until I’m blue in the face — that we use diesels to fill the gap. In the meantime, we do everything — we move heaven and earth and the moon, for Moon Lake — to try to get to as much renewable as possible on all fronts. That’s the way to reduce those rented diesels.

But let me say this: If what we did was to build a diesel plant, you can’t then reduce the diesels because you have built them and you now need to pay them off over time.

We have a fundamental difference in what we believe, but what I heard Mr. Hall say when he was here answering questions from the opposition is that the leveled cost of capacity for rented diesels is virtually the same — \$1 less per kilowatt year than a diesel plan.

Back to the original question about Moon Lake and that project — yes, we need to work hard toward it. I don’t compare it to large hydro projects from the provinces, which are orders of magnitude larger. What I compare it to are the types of projects that we have going on here in the territory. I agree that there is a lot of work to resolve to get to the Moon Lake project, but what I want to say is that, in principle, it is a sound project in terms of what it would do for our energy grid and, in principle, we are working with Carcross/Tagish First Nation. I think that they will be the lead on the project and we are there to support them, and I think that this is an important thing.

**Mr. Dixon:** Does the minister have a cost for the investment in the permanent diesels that are being invested in by the government currently for Dawson?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Deputy Chair, my apologies. Could I just ask the member opposite to repeat the question? I’m sorry.

**Mr. Dixon:** The corporation is investing in permanent diesels in this budget year, and I am wondering how much the minister can tell us is being invested in those permanent diesels this year.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** At the risk of confusing the public, I just want to be very clear that what I am being asked about now are diesels that we have permanently in our possession that are for backup — should one of our hydro facilities go down, or one of our transmission lines go down, that we have the ability to make sure that the lights can stay on for Yukoners. I am asking the corporation to reach out and find out what that investment is this year for refurbishment and replacement of our existing permanent diesel fleet.

**Mr. Dixon:** Just to be clear, the government is currently investing in permanent diesel generation in the community of Dawson. I believe that two of the units will be moved out to Callison and the remaining four will stay downtown. When the minister is able to, I would like him to provide a sense of the cost of that and what that level of investment would look like. I know that I have seen some information being handed to him, so I am hoping that he now has a response to that.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The member asked about what we are going to be investing. It’s not just this year, so let me make that clear. Yukon Energy’s diesel replacement project is to replace our diesel backups or to refurbish them. It is to extend their lives, because they are at the end of their lives. It is going to happen over the next five years, so it’s not increasing any diesel capacity; it’s replacing, or refurbishing, existing diesel backup capacity. The intention is to complete the project by the first quarter of 2024. Typically, the new diesels are more efficient than the old diesels, so what it will also do is remove two of the rented diesels, because the new ones are just better.

I understand from the department that, for Dawson, that amount is in the range of \$10 million and that, overall, for the replacements for Whitehorse, Faro, and Dawson, it has an estimated cost of about \$45 million.

**Mr. Dixon:** Just to confirm, as I may have missed the last piece there, the total cost there was \$45 million that the government is investing in permanent diesels in the Yukon?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Yes, Deputy Chair; again, the Yukon’s grid is not connected to any of the provincial grids. We have what is referred to as an “islanded” grid. What that means is that we have to be ready, should some of our infrastructure go down — either the transmission line or one of our large hydro facilities — and that’s why we have backup diesels on hand. This is referring to those backup diesels, yes.

Those backup diesels — the cost for the project over the next several years — for all of that replacement and/or refurbishment — is in the range of \$45 million.

**Mr. Dixon:** I’ll move on. I think we’ve gone as far as we need to go on that particular issue.

Has the minister considered expanding the mandate of the Yukon Development Corporation beyond energy? Has he considered setting up a fund to invest in other economic diversification activities, such as innovation or other aspects of our economy?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** There is activity around innovation, in particular with energy, both through Economic Development and some through Energy, Mines and Resources, which is taking the lead under *Our Clean Future*, but I don’t believe that there has been any conversation about the development corporation taking on that role as well.

**Mr. Dixon:** Is there currently a \$10-million economic infrastructure investment fund that is administered by the YDC to advance economic diversification and innovation?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** There is no fund with the Yukon Development Corporation that the member is asking about. I can sort of point to a couple of things that may be of interest or related. One is that there is work under Economic Development, which set up things like, for example, the NorthLight Innovation centre, but that was under Economic Development. It’s not under the Yukon Development Corporation. Under the Yukon Development Corporation, we did set up the innovative renewable energy initiative, which we have been talking about here today. Under this budget, we are hoping to increase it, because we think it is very successful, but it’s not a fund, as the member opposite is describing it.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the minister's clarity on that — that the mandate of the Yukon Development Corporation hasn't been changed, nor has a fund been established.

The reason I ask is because that was verbatim from the Liberals' platform in 2016. The commitment, at that time, was to expand the mandate of the Yukon Development Corporation beyond energy and establish a \$10-million economic infrastructure investment fund through YDC to advance economic diversification and innovation. Of course, that remains unfulfilled, and that was a promise that was either broken or ignored by the Liberals following the last election. I believe it was in the minister's predecessor's mandate letter from the Premier.

With that, I will move on. I want to return briefly to the issue of Moon Lake. I just want to confirm — if the minister is able to — the number that I had seen previously, that we were told by the witnesses some time ago for Moon Lake was \$300 million. I am wondering if the minister can comment on that and confirm if that is the best estimate that he has as well.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The order of magnitude — we're not talking about any sort of full analysis. It is just an order of magnitude number that could run the range of a few hundred million dollars — yes — and it could also be somewhere in the range of 30 megawatts to 40 megawatts. As I said earlier, the work has really not been done yet to scope out the project appropriately. That will happen in the stages of work, as we have already described, and that dialogue has begun with our partners.

With respect to the innovation fund from the previous mandate, what I understand is that the money that was contemplated there was used to set up the Innovative Renewable Energy Initiative. That is what set it up, and it has been going for four or five years now, and we have just bumped it up. I would have to work the math backward to figure out roughly how much money we have invested to date, but we would be getting close to that \$10 million — but I am happy to look into that.

**Mr. Kent:** I'm just curious if the minister can tell us if it is the Yukon Development Corporation that would be the lead on Yukon discussions around the southeast Alaska inter-tie. If so, is he able to provide us with the government's position on that project and if he sees a role for the Yukon in pursuing that?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Can I just confirm if we were talking about the southeast Alaska electrical grid inter-tie or if we were talking about British Columbia? Could I just confirm, please?

**Mr. Kent:** In some conversations that we have had with various industry folks, they have talked about the southeast Alaska inter-tie, so it would be specific to southeast Alaska. It's not a British Columbia inter-tie down the Stewart-Cassiar; it's specific to that Lynn Canal area and the communities along Lynn Canal.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I do think that it would likely be the Yukon Energy Corporation that would begin those conversations. I don't know of any that have happened formally to date. I think that we understand that, as we upgrade the transmission lines around the Southern Lakes, including down

to Carcross, and as we get to a project like Moon Lake, which goes further down the south Klondike Highway, we get incrementally closer to Skagway. I think that those conversations will develop over time. My answer for the member opposite is that the likely lead will be Yukon Energy Corporation, but there is always work that could happen with major projects under the Executive Council Office and/or Economic Development in their work relationship with southeast Alaska. I am not certain which way it would go, but I think that it is fair to say that Yukon Energy Corporation could and would likely be involved, although that conversation has not formally happened to date as far as I know.

**Mr. Kent:** So, just to clarify, the minister said that the Energy Corporation would play a role, but none of those conversations have taken place yet.

He did mention the Southern Lakes transmission network, so I have a number of questions about projects in the 10-year renewable plan. Perhaps that's where I'll pick up the conversation with the minister.

On the Yukon Energy Corporation website, it talks about the Southern Lakes transmission network, and I'll just read it into the record. It says: "An upgraded transmission line between Whitehorse and Tutshi-Moon..." — Moon Lake — "... to deliver excess renewable power to the pumped storage facility in the summer and make that power available on the Yukon grid during the winter."

The minister has explained, sort of, how that process would work.

"An upgraded transmission line to Jakes Corners allows the Atlin hydro plant to connect to the Yukon grid." So, that would be sort of part of discussions that are underway already.

"Enables the connection of future community-based renewable projects in southern Yukon to the grid.

"Creates the opportunity for future sales of surplus renewable electricity to Skagway."

This, again, is from the Yukon Energy's website.

I'm just curious — there is obviously an existing transmission line from Whitehorse to Carcross. Can the minister just confirm for us — and I believe it to be the case: Is that transmission owned by ATCO Electric Yukon at this point? Would it be upgrading the existing transmission line or building a new transmission line to get power from Whitehorse to the Tutshi-Moon Lake project?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Every one of these projects that we've been talking about today are really important and actually quite exciting projects. We talked about Atlin, about how we could get a lot of winter power out of that. Then we talked about Moon Lake and how we could use our excess summer energy to create winter energy. That is really quite important. Then, if you think about a connection down to Skagway and then along Lynn Canal — although they have always had their own challenges with connecting across from one community to another, given the challenges of the geography — Skagway is an interesting opportunity, because, again, what kind of energy do they need? They need summer energy, because that is when the cruise ships come in, and what they would really like is to be able to take those cruise ships off

of running bunker fuel when they come into port and have enough energy in town to supply those cruise ships, but it is a lot of infrastructure to put in just for that one brief season that happens in the summer. But look at the match with us — we need winter energy and they need summer energy. We have excess summer energy and they have excess winter energy, so it actually could be a really great fit.

When I said that there were no conversations, what I was trying to say is that there have been no formal conversations to date; there may have been many informal conversations — I would have to check.

The member asked about who owns the transmission line between Whitehorse and Carcross. It is ATCO that owns that transmission line. I would have to check about the technical specifications on that line and what it would need to be upgraded to for Moon Lake and/or other potential projects in the future, but those technical questions I would have to check back with the corporation on to get a response for the member opposite.

**Mr. Kent:** The minister is going to look into the technical aspects, but obviously when my colleague was asking questions earlier about Moon Lake — according to the Yukon Energy website, it is expected to come online in 2028-29. Obviously, this line would be required — this line from Whitehorse to Moon Lake would be required to allow that to come online.

The minister, I think, mentioned to my colleague — and he can correct me if I'm wrong — that there are no cost estimates yet for Moon Lake. Are there any cost estimates for this Southern Lakes transmission network, including the upgraded transmission line from Whitehorse to Jakes Corner that would allow the Atlin hydro plant to connect to the Yukon grid? Another question too: Will there be any upgrades between Jakes Corner and Carcross along the Tagish Road as part of this Southern Lakes transmission network enhancement?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** There are various stages to this. Atlin will come off the Atlin Road and then go over to Jakes, which is just a kilometre, or a couple of kilometres, away — that little jog there. Then you catch the Alaska Highway, so we would need to build the transmission between Atlin and Jakes, largely — some of which is in the Yukon, some of which is in BC. Then we would need to upgrade the line from Jakes to town or maybe to the cut-off, I expect.

Then for the other projects that we are discussing here, sort of the expansion of the Southern Lakes, we would have to upgrade from Whitehorse to Carcross. We would tie from Carcross over to Jakes. It would be smart to get a redundancy there. We would have to build down to Moon Lake. Again, I don't want to call this our "projected cost". I want to say it's an "order of magnitude cost" that we are talking about for upgrading those lines and building the new transmission line. It is in the range of \$100 million.

The way to think of it is: If you are building new transmission line, of course, it depends on the voltage of the line, but it's about \$1 million per kilometre. That is a rough number that I am told.

**Mr. Kent:** I am just going to jump over to the Southern Lakes enhancement project. I was on the Yukon Energy Corporation's website today. What they have mentioned there is that, in 2020, the Yukon Energy Corporation Board of Directors decided to prepare a proposal to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board — YESAB — to assess the project. A fall 2021 update indicates that fieldwork and landowner engagement that was originally scheduled for this past summer could not be completed because of high water levels in the Southern Lakes. Because of that, they were not able to submit their proposal to YESAB as originally scheduled for this summer asking them to assess this project as had been originally planned.

Is the minister able to tell us when they do plan — or if they are still planning — to submit this project to YESAB for an environmental and socio-economic assessment?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I can say that the flooding of the Southern Lakes this past year was incredibly significant for all of the folks along the lake — the same folks who are directly connected to the enhanced storage project. I know that conversations are ongoing, but I don't know yet if the Yukon Energy Corporation has landed on a game plan. I am not able to update the member opposite at this time.

**Mr. Kent:** As I had indicated, it was decided to go forward in 2020 with preparing the proposal. From the website, it mentions five key commitments as part of that decision. I will ask the minister about those. There was to be work with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council to complete fieldwork for a heritage resources impact assessment. Has that work been completed as part of this preparation for this proposal?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The only note that I have on this is that fieldwork that was originally scheduled for this past summer couldn't be completed because of the flooding.

**Mr. Kent:** I will just ask about the second point, but perhaps if the minister can clarify if any fieldwork has been completed to date on that heritage resources impact assessment — or was it all scheduled for this summer in advance of filing the YESAB project proposal which originally, of course, before the flooding, was scheduled to happen this summer?

That second commitment was to: "Continue our discussions with First Nations governments and other stakeholders in the project area to develop a Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan." Again, this is from the website: "This will help us track potential effects of the project and outline how we'll make adjustments, if needed, to address significant effects."

Has there been any work done on the monitoring and adaptive management plan as outlined by the Energy Corporation?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The commitment from the corporation, which included: the monitoring and adaptive management plan; the fieldwork on the heritage resources impact assessment; negotiating draft project agreements with affected First Nations; the plan for a third-party adjudication process; and meeting with the property owners expected to be directly affected by the project to review erosion and

groundwater mitigation plans — I don't have an update on any of those right now. I will just let the member opposite know that I can check into where things are at. Basically, what I understand is that the flood overtook all of this work. I can just check in to see what specific details I can find out and share across, but everything switched when, in the spring, the flood came. We are back down to normal levels now, but it was quite the summer.

**Mr. Kent:** I appreciate the minister mentioning the other three key commitments that I was going to ask him about — the specific benefit agreements with the First Nations, meetings with property owners, and the adjudication process. I would ask the minister at this point now, given the events and the flooding of this past summer, if he still believes that this project should be considered and submitted to YESAB for an environmental and socio-economic assessment.

When you go down to the fall update on this, it says that the Southern Lakes residents can be assured that, at a minimum, the project will not be implemented before the fall of 2023. I think that is what it said, but I am just curious what the minister's thoughts are, given what we experienced this past summer in the Southern Lakes area.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** All along, I think that one of the things that has remained critical about this project is that there be necessary conversations with First Nations and the citizens who live along or near the lake and who would be affected by the enhanced storage project.

The situation has been affected by the flood, and I am not sure where that is landing, but I think we all look at the flood and try to understand where folks are at with respect to the project. I think it is still important to have that dialogue.

I will check on Yukon Energy and the commitments that were made to see what the intention is, and I will try to report back.

**Mr. Kent:** So, yes, we look forward to receiving that update from the minister.

I just want to ask a couple of quick questions about the battery storage project that is happening on the north side of Robert Service Way here in Whitehorse. As you drive up Robert Service Way, you can see some clearing going on — about three-quarters of the way up on the north side of the road. I just wanted to confirm that this is indeed the area — the Kwanlin Dün First Nation land — where the battery storage project will go. If the minister can just confirm that for us, and if he is able to provide us with some of the terms of the lease — the length and the cost of the lease with Kwanlin Dün First Nation — for that spot, that would be helpful.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** First of all, the site that the member opposite described is the site that is going to be for the battery storage. I know that we are in conversations with First Nations — both Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council — as potential energy proponents and investors in the battery. There are some opportunities for them, and we are just negotiating that now. Again, it is a negotiation that is in progress, so I am unable to provide any update at this time, but I can say that it is the location that we are working on with First Nations.

**Mr. Kent:** We look forward to when the minister is able to provide us with the terms of the lease for that specific property that will house the battery storage facility. I want to thank the minister for his time here. We will look forward to some of the other commitments and getting responses. I thank the officials for coming and providing support to the minister. I know that my colleague, the Leader of the Third Party, the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, has some questions here this afternoon as well.

**Ms. White:** I welcome the one official we have seen before and the other who is joining us today.

Just to follow up on what my colleague was just talking about on the area at the top of the south access, it has recently been cleared of trees. I noticed that the trees are all piled up in heaps and look like they are destined to be burned, although the same minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation has said that he is encouraging brush piles to be made available for woodcutters. Maybe this isn't a question, but I will put that out: It looks like it has been piled up as burn piles, and as firewood is a hot commodity these days in the Yukon, it may be worth noting. I will just leave that. I don't expect an answer, as the minister can just check it out on his way past.

I think that part of the conversation that is important — and I want to give the minister an opportunity — is that the NDP fundamentally believe that we should be renting generators and that we shouldn't have invested in permanent diesel infrastructure, but I think that one thing that would be very helpful to have on record is if we can talk about the costs. What would be the cost of a 30-year investment for the diesel generators — for example, the project we were talking about three years ago — versus the cost of renting? Could the minister walk through why it makes financial sense? It certainly makes environmental sense, but maybe the minister can help us better understand the financial reason why we would rent diesel generators, as opposed to purchasing and building permanent diesel infrastructure.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I thank the member opposite for the comment about the trees. I will follow up on that.

As we heard the corporation say when they were here as witnesses on Thursday, October 21, the way that you tend to calculate this out is by using a metric called the "levelized cost of capacity".

I will ask the Energy Corporation to tell me what the overall dollar figure would be if they were to build a 12.5-megawatt diesel plant to deal with the gap of energy demand. I want to differentiate, first and foremost, that we are not talking about backup. We do need backup in case something goes down — that is different — but what we are talking about is having capacity for additional energy due to demands by Yukoners, whether that be residential, commercial, or industrial.

What we were told is that the levelized cost for rented diesels is \$211 a kilowatt hour. What we were told is that the levelized cost for a diesel plant, one that you would build, is \$212 a kilowatt hour, so it is virtually equivalent. So, from an economic perspective, it does not make any difference whether

we rent or build, but from an environmental perspective, it makes a huge difference, and the reason, as I have said, is because, once you build that plant, it will disincentivize you to invest in renewables, because you just invested in that diesel plant, which you have to pay off over time. So, it is much better when you intend to try to move — to shift your energy economy — to a renewable energy economy; it is much, much better — when the costs are the same — to move to rentals so that you are nimble and that you move to reduce those rentals over time, as you increase your renewable capacity.

**Ms. White:** I think it could be helpful to the conversation if information like that was readily available on the website. I just say that in terms of — to know that it is literally a dollar difference in an hour, it is a really big — I mean, years ago, when we were having these conversations, the price wasn't quite so comparable. I remember going to the open house that was being held out at Hidden Valley school and pleading my case to staff, at that point in time, including that I made a written submission saying that we should rent the generators, that we should not tie ourselves to dirty energy for a generation, because if I couldn't believe in technology, then there wasn't a lot of hope for us as a planet.

I appreciate the answer, but I think that having that kind of information or that kind of comparison on how decisions are made is important, because again, there will be those of us who make the environmental argument, but knowing that the financial argument is also strong is really helpful to getting people outside.

When the witnesses were here last week, and we were talking about different things, we talked about the amount of renewable energy that was coming online. It's important to note, at this point in time, that I have been in this House for 10 years. For five years, I didn't see a lot of action, and I have seen multiple plans come forward about our 10-year plan or our 20-year plan or "this is the future". I've gone to public information sessions about next-generation hydro. I've gone to information sessions about liquified natural gas. I've gone to information sessions about wind. I've gone to information sessions about biomass. Interestingly enough, there hasn't been any really large-scale information sessions on solar, but I feel like solar has done a pretty good job of getting itself known. Through all of that, some of the conversations that also come up, of course, are demand-side management and the challenges that both the Yukon Energy Corporation and ATCO Electric Yukon face in trying to manage energy. I have also been to public information sessions about demand-side management and different opportunities.

I would like to give the minister a bit of an opportunity to maybe catch us up on some public information sessions that are coming or, if there is specific information, where people can look.

I have talked a lot in the House about my own decisions. For example, I installed an air source heat pump in 2016, before there was a concrete economic argument at the time, because there was no information, but through the Energy Solutions Centre, I was one of the people where we monitored energy consumption through that unit.

I am happy to say it went from being a \$600 grant to a \$1,500 — I got the \$1,500 — to knowing that now we are offsetting the costs of those machines by up to 30 percent, or \$8,500.

Some things I have seen in this House are our ability to slowly move forward, but I think the minister has highlighted the need to move forward in leaps and bounds. Maybe he can let us know what information sessions are coming up about renewables that are coming on and when we can expect to have conversations publicly about projects like Moon Lake.

Again, celebrating what is going to be coming is good, but I was at next-generation hydro meetings, and we were talking about what that would look like, and here we are now — so, if he can let us know when information sessions may be coming online and when people will be able to access more information about upcoming projects.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I will add a few things to the question. First of all, I will have to get the corporation to let me know about upcoming opportunities, but I can add a few things. For example, we know that we have renewable projects that we are working on within each of our off-grid communities. Because they are dependent on diesel, those are generally easier wins. We started with Old Crow, but we have stuff happening in Beaver Creek, in Burwash, and in Watson Lake. One of the differences was that we argued that you should work with offset fuel costs rather than the levelized costs, because it is subsidized for them to be the price here, and then it made no sense.

So, those projects are now starting to move, and I think that this was the little unlock that we got to. Again, maybe Yukoners saw the piece on CBC's *The National* last night in Old Crow. It was a good piece.

We have work happening across our grid because, even though the main grid uses the Whitehorse dam, the Aishihik dam, and the Mayo dam and Fish Lake — but really, there is still diesel burned here, so getting renewable projects onto our islanded grid displaces a lot of diesel. That's important. That's like wind up on Haeckel Hill and other projects. Teslin with the biomass is a great project; that's really important.

The last thing that I want to say is that we also brought in an order-in-council, a regulation, which said — for the Yukon Utilities Board to be able to consider demand-side management. So, we really want to help the Yukon Utilities Board to get to better decisions so that it will help us to reduce our energy needs broadly, and our utilities are good partners with that.

Anyway, I won't go on, Deputy Chair. This is a very important question. I'm passionate about it. I'm happy to try to get more information to members here from the corporation.

Seeing the time, Deputy Chair, I move that you report progress.

**Deputy Chair:** It has been moved by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes that the Chair report progress.

*Motion agreed to*

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

**Deputy Chair:** It has been moved by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

*Motion agreed to*

*Deputy Speaker resumes the Chair*

**Deputy Speaker (Ms. Blake):** I will now call the House to order.

May the House have a report from the Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole?

**Chair's report**

**Ms. Tredger:** Madam Deputy Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 9, entitled *Act to Amend the Cannabis Control and Regulation Act (2021)*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*, and directed me to report progress.

**Deputy Speaker:** You have heard the report from the Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole.

Are you agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Deputy Speaker:** I declare the report carried.

The time being 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.*

**The following sessional paper was tabled November 2, 2021:**

35-1-27

*Yukon University 2020-2021 Annual Report (McLean)*

**The following document was filed November 2, 2021:**

35-1-13

*Yukon Geographical Place Names Board 2020-2021 Annual Report (Pillai)*