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Wednesday, February 23, 2011

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**The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker**

**Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories**

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Paul Delorey

(Hay River North)

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(Tu Nedhe)

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*Minister responsible for the*

*NWT Power Corporation*

Mr. Norman Yakeleya

(Sahtu)

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**PRAYER 6085**

**MINISTERS' STATEMENTS 6085**

114-16(5) – Public Service Capacity Initiative (R. McLeod) 6085

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS 6086**

Congratulations to Ms. Siobhan Quigg on Being Selected to Attend

French Language Conference in Quebec City (Yakeleya) 6086

Congratulations to Commission Scolaire Francophone on Achievements (Bisaro) 6086

Preventative Maintenance Assistance for Homeowners (Jacobson) 6086

Territorial Hotel Tax (Hawkins) 6087

Future of Health Care in the NWT (Ramsay) 6087

Public Consultations on Proposed New Wildlife Act (Abernethy) 6088

V-Day Campaign to Stop Violence against Women and Girls (Bromley) 6088

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY 6089**

**ORAL QUESTIONS 6089**

**WRITTEN QUESTIONS 6096**

**CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS 6096**

**REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE 6142**

**ORDERS OF THE DAY 6142**

**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

**Wednesday, February 23, 2011**

**Members Present**

Mr. Abernethy, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, Hon. Paul Delorey, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Krutko, Hon. Sandy Lee, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Michael McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Ramsay, Hon. Floyd Roland, Mr. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:33 p.m.

# Prayer

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey):** Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. Colleagues, I’d like to draw your attention to the visitor’s gallery to the presence of our Clerk, Mr. Tim Mercer, and his lovely little daughter Mira visiting today.

---Applause

Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers’ statements. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

# Ministers’ Statements

## MINISTER’S STATEMENT 114-16(5): PUBLIC SERVICE CAPACITY INITIATIVE

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to provide Members with an update on the Public Service Capacity Initiative, which Municipal and Community Affairs is jointly implementing with the Department of Human Resources, the NWT Association of Communities and the Local Government Administrators of the Northwest Territories.

The program was introduced in 2009 and has been developed around a series of actions that are aimed at enhancing community government public service capacity. Building public service capacity in both the GNWT and community governments is part of the Refocusing Government Initiative that contributes to the Assembly’s goal of effective and efficient government.

One of the larger programs, the Advancing Local Government Administrators Program, has three objectives. The first is to assist community governments with recruitment, development and retention of NWT residents into local government administrator positions. The second objective is to provide meaningful and practical training and development opportunities to individuals currently employed as or interested in becoming a local government administrator. The final objective is to develop a stable pool of qualified local government administrators in the Northwest Territories.

To date, funding has been provided to 10 community governments to access support for these objectives. The community governments are: Fort Good Hope, Fort Liard, Fort Resolution, the Hay River Reserve, Sachs Harbour, Ulukhaktok, Wekweetì, Whati, Norman Wells and Fort Providence.

Another element of the Public Service Capacity Initiative is the Community Government Mentorship Program which is designed to link new or less experienced local government administrators with experienced local government mentors. The program is being introduced this year and will assist five to 10 local government administrators annually with mentors.

I would also like to highlight some of the initiatives that the Local Government Administrators of the NWT are leading. These include a marketing campaign, recruitment initiatives, the development of a pool of professionals who can provide short-term support to local governments, and training events including professional development at their annual general meeting. In addition to the initiatives being led by the Local Government Administrators of the NWT we are also working with the NWT Association of Communities. This organization is our main partner in delivering good governance workshops, which to date have been accessed by over 500 councillors from 28 community governments.

As community governments take on greater responsibilities for the delivery of programs and services to residents, it is important that the Government of the Northwest Territories and our partners, the NWT Association of Communities and the Local Government Administrators of the NWT, continue to provide ongoing support and assistance. I will be pleased to continue to provide my colleagues with updates on the Public Service Capacity Initiative as we continue work on this important program to recruit, retain and develop our local government administrators and to assist community governments with governance initiatives.

This is an important initiative that will help us achieve our vision for sustainable, safe and vibrant communities.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members’ statements. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

# Members’ Statements

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON CONGRATULATIONS TO MS. SIOBHAN QUIGG ON BEING SELECTED TO ATTEND FRENCH LANGUAGE CONFERENCE IN QUEBEC CITY

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s always a pleasure to recognize the achievements of our young people and that is what I am going to do today. I’m speaking of Siobhan Quigg, a grade 11 student in Norman Wells. She is the only student from the Northwest Territories chosen to attend a French for Future Youth Forum in Quebec City later this week. The conference is to promote bilingualism. There were 125 applicants from across Canada and only 30 young people were chosen.

This is a real honour and a real testament to Miss Quigg’s proficiency in the French language, especially since there is not a lot of French spoken in Norman Wells. Siobhan took a shine to the language when she was in kindergarten and was inspired by a French-speaking teacher. She’s been taking French classes since grade 1. Her success speaks to her enthusiasm and hard work in learning French, but also to the great support she had from her teachers and parents. I’m sure they are very proud of her.

Miss Quigg’s trip to Quebec City will no doubt be an exciting one. It will be the first time in her life that she had to speak another language the whole time. It will be a real opportunity for one of our students to enjoy French food, music and culture with her counterparts across Canada.

I’m positive Siobhan will share our Northwest Territories culture with her new-found friends in Quebec and that she will be a wonderful ambassador on our behalf. I heartily congratulate Siobhan and her teachers. I’m sure her fellow students in Norman Wells will benefit from all that she learns during her week in Quebec. Merci, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON CONGRATULATIONS TO COMMISSION SCOLAIRE FRANCOPHONE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, the establishment and expansion of French first language schooling in the NWT is a success story. It shows what people can accomplish if they have passion and tenacity.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. BISARO:** On the occasion of Education Week, I would like to salute the Commission Scolaire Francophone on their achievements, and I have to highlight and salute Ecole Allain St-Cyr, which sits in the riding of Frame Lake and provides excellent francophone education to the residents of Yellowknife. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE ASSISTANCE FOR HOMEOWNERS

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Homeowners in my riding need preventative maintenance assistance to replace wooden pilings and aging fuel tanks. The Housing Corporation’s Contributing Assistance for Repairs and Enhancement, the CARE program, is available for some homeowners but needs to increase to fit the needs of people in my riding.

Wooden pilings underneath the homes in communities are rotting. They are deteriorating in the sunlight. They’re directly affected by melting permafrost and soil erosion. Some of the pilings are decayed so much that you could punch a screwdriver through the wood. A house in Inuvik just last year, Mr. Speaker, collapsed. Replacing a house, especially in my riding, is more expensive than replacing old pilings.

As we know, leaking fuel tanks are a big problem. It is every homeowner’s responsibility to make sure that their oil tanks are in good condition. However, if they live in Nunakput they probably pay $1,700 for a tank of heating fuel every six weeks, Mr. Speaker. Your power bill is about $900. That’s the cost of a fuel tank every six weeks. Age, sand rub and corrosion are affecting fuel tanks in my riding. Again, cleanup is more expensive, other than prevention. Offering a subsidy or replacing a fuel tank will go a long way in preventing spills and reducing costs overall.

Mr. Speaker, we need to invest more preventative maintenance to keep homes from failing and disappearing, or even collapsing. This will reduce the number of households in core need. We need to educate our people on their responsibilities to give them support that they need to take care of their homes. Mr. Speaker, we need to enhance programming to remote communities where there aren’t many options. When people need to make repairs in our houses, we will make suitable, adequate and affordable homes an achievable goal. Mr. Speaker, we have to help our private homeowners in the small communities.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON TERRITORIAL HOTEL TAX

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the NWT’s limited economy, tourism is one of the best opportunities to bring in new money to our North. One way being proposed to build upon that is being put forward by the Hotel Association. They support the creation of a territorial 1 percent hotel tax. Now, at first glance, that may seem counter-intuitive, Mr. Speaker, especially coming from business where they are saying we need a new tax, but that 1 percent hotel tax would add up on average as $1.50 per room each day, Mr. Speaker.

What they believe strongly in is this money would be new money generated to be able to be focused in on tourism opportunities in the Northwest Territories. On average, a 1 percent hotel tax is less than the cost of buying a pop in a hotel vending machine.

As it currently stands, hotel tax is a common function across Canada and used internationally. Mr. Speaker, 10 of our provinces have hotel taxes and they range from a variable to up to about 3 percent. A 1 percent hotel tax, I am suggesting, is not very large but is being called upon by the Hotel Association to do good things.

According to the Yellowknife Hotel Association, if a 1 percent levy had existed in Yellowknife in 2008, it would have generated approximately $208,000 and in 2009 when the global recession was hitting Canada as well as the world, Mr. Speaker, that still would have generated approximately $200,000 new dollars for our North. This money could be invested directly back into tourism marketing, specifically towards maybe someday a hotel convention bureau.

Most of our conference meeting planners want to come north but we don’t have an organized function to help target that. New money generated by a 1 percent hotel tax put forward by the Hotel Association says this may be the way to do this.

Mr. Speaker, we need to encourage the Finance Minister to consider this, especially because it is being strongly advocated by the Hotel Association. Mr. Speaker, these are the people that would help organize it. These are the people who are the backbone of our economy. There is a bread and butter of getting things done. Mr. Speaker, this is an echo held and shouted out loud by industry. Would the government finally listen?

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Finance later today to ask him what his resistance is to considering a hotel tax in the Northwest Territories directly focused in on tourism benefits. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE IN THE NWT

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak today about the future of health care in our Territory. Mr. Speaker, I spoke many times about the lack of planning and foresight by this government when it comes to future needs of a resident’s health care. First off, Mr. Speaker, is the system itself. We have some of the best health care professionals and providers in this country working for us today. I have had personal experience in the past year with my own health and I have to say that the doctors and nurses and front-line health care staff that we have here in the Northwest Territories are second to none and do a great job for us.

The problem, Mr. Speaker, is our inability to govern, fund and plan for the future. The Minister suggests that the Foundation for Change will address system-wide problems, deal with funding, reallocate money and provide a base for this system to be efficient and effective. I do hope that this is the beginning of the end of talk, because, Mr. Speaker, as the saying goes, talk is cheap. What we need to do, Mr. Speaker, is take action.

I am in favour of the government making health care much more of a priority and billing than it currently gets. We need to fix the issues that can be identified, Mr. Speaker. Many of these issues are nothing new to this government. They have been around for a number of years. Mr. Speaker, we also have to start planning for the future. What will be needed is a complete capital retrofit of Stanton Territorial Hospital, the flagship of our health care system.

Mr. Speaker, this is going to have to take place in a time when government is going to be looking at cutting back the available capital dollars for infrastructure projects around the Territory and, in my mind, Mr. Speaker, this project is probably going to come in with a price tag of upwards of $200 million. We have to start putting money aside, we have to start planning for that capital retrofit of that hospital, and the sooner the better, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS ON PROPOSED NEW WILDLIFE ACT

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the last couple of weeks I and a few of my colleagues have raised concerns about the current public consultation process that has taken place between November 24, 2010, and January 31, 2011, on the new NWT Wildlife Act. Although the Minister continues to suggest that all due process has taken place and that the public consultation process has been conducted appropriately, many throughout the Northwest Territories remain concerned. Mr. Speaker, I’m one of them.

Mr. Speaker, the public consultation process on the proposed Wildlife Act began on November 24th when the public draft, plain language document and consultation schedule were released publicly. Essentially when these items were released it was the first time that the public had an opportunity to see the department’s proposal firsthand. The first opportunity interest groups throughout the Northwest Territories had an opportunity to dig into the details to ensure that the proposal truly is in the best interest of all people of the Northwest Territories.

Originally, all public meetings were scheduled to run from November 24th until December 25th, which is 22 days, Mr. Speaker. The dates were ultimately extended until the end of January as a number of important stakeholders were missed in the initial round. So excluding Christmas break when all GNWT offices are closed, the total days available for input, based on the distributed draft and plain language document, was 47 days, Mr. Speaker, and that includes weekends. Forty-seven days, Mr. Speaker. Forty-seven days for interested stakeholders to conduct in-depth analysis on a 70-page, incredibly complex act. Forty-seven days without any support from the government in any way, shape or form.

Mr. Speaker, this seems ridiculous and hardly provides me or many stakeholders with confidence that the Minister was or is truly interested in hearing anything that these groups have to say.

Further, the Aboriginal groups that participated in the drafting of the legislation were financially compensated for their involvement and participation. They had dollars available to do their legal reviews and attend the meetings. Other stakeholders did not have this support or opportunity from the government.

Mr. Speaker, this particular public consultation is suspect. More of a real transparent consultation is required. Mr. Speaker, and this is important, it’s more important to get this act right than to get it right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON V-DAY CAMPAIGN TO STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is V-Day, a day when we focus on the tragic violence against women and girls in the North. You can’t get through a newspaper without reading of these horrors across the NWT. Our non-government organizations are our public record and our own Assembly Members place this issue at the top of the public agenda. Despite GNWT program action, the numbers and suffering mount.

We all know the facts and we must act. Here are some priorities for action, priorities that I’ve collected directly from the YWCA Yellowknife and the Centre for Northern Families.

First, the government must commit to maintain its current funding level of $500,000 for phase III of the Coalition Against Family Violence Action Plan. Women cannot be safe until we have an RCMP presence in all our communities. Without enforcement, emergency protection orders mean nothing. We must have these police. The Trauma Recovery Program for women and children who have experienced violence needs to be reinstated. Community-based programs that support both men and women in transition must be established. Enhancement funding for shelters outside Yellowknife, in Tuk, Inuvik, Fort Smith and Hay River, are desperately needed. Our non-government organizations look forward to implementation of the new program for people who violently abuse, and to support the recommendations of the five-year review of the Protection Against Family Violence Act.

The Y and Centre for Northern Families stress that addressing violence against women shouldn’t be just all about intervention. Shelters, prisons, victims services, RCMP, courts, et cetera, are needed but, Mr. Speaker, we must place greater focus on prevention.

The Coalition Against Family Violence had an all-day meeting yesterday to plan for the next phase of the action plan. I look forward to a prompt briefing on the meeting results and confirmation that funds will be allocated. I know these measures are costly and the money is short, but people are suffering and dying. We must put our resources to our priorities. Mr. Speaker, we have to do a better job. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

# Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MR. SPEAKER:** Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to the gallery and to the presence of Mr. Myles Kirvan, deputy minister of Justice Canada from Ottawa. Accompanying him is Ms. Karan Shaner, assistant deputy minister/Attorney General, Department of Justice, Government of the Northwest Territories. Mr. Kirvan is here in Yellowknife this week to take part in a Justice Canada symposium entitled Justice Under the Northern Lights. Welcome to the Assembly.

The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d also like to welcome Mr. Kirvan and Ms. Shaner.

I’d also like to recognize Karen McMaster, acting executive director of the NWT Wildlife Federation.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

# Oral Questions

## QUESTION 516-16(5): HOMELESSNESS ASSISTANCE FUND

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some questions today for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I’d like to ask some questions regarding the Homelessness Assistance Fund.

From what I know of this fund, it is a fund that is used as a program of last resort when people have lost their home or are in between homes and need some assistance to make sure that they don’t go homeless. I’d like to ask the Minister at this point if she could explain to me what, in her mind, is a definition of a program of last resort in terms of the time frame that she expects people to be able to have to apply for this assistance and maybe get it.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The time frame for those who apply for this funding varies and is dependent on the specific situation. I’ve seen a turnaround of 24 hours or days.

**MS. BISARO:** I’d like to give the Minister a bit of a scenario which, unfortunately, occurred. A family was offered an apartment with Yellowknife Housing Authority. They ended the lease in their current place. Then a policy intervened and three weeks before the end of their current lease they were advised that, no, they had arrears and they had to pay the arrears before they could move into their new place. The response basically from Health and Social Services was that policy did not allow them to go into this place.

I’d like to ask the Minister, if this is a program of last resort, should staff members not be working to accommodate these people who are in a difficult situation between one home and the next as opposed to simply refusing them?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Without knowing the details and facts of the situation, it’s difficult for me to comment, but I think it should be noted that when we say a program is one of last resort it does not equal to saying that anybody who applies for it will get it. They would have to meet the guidelines and policies of those programs. Without knowing the facts, I could not give full answers to exactly what happened in this situation. If the Member wants to bring the details to me, I’d be happy to look into that.

**MS. BISARO:** To the Minister, this is not a current situation. It was solved. It was not solved through any assistance through government, unfortunately. It was solved through the assistance of the community. I’d like to ask the Minister, when a person is desperate for homeownership assistance, or for home assistance I should say, so that they do not become homeless, what is it that the staff do? What do they look at to see whether or not an application should be accepted or denied?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** This pot of money for $125,000 was allocated to help those in most need. They sometimes don’t fall into other programs that are available in the government. I am aware of lots of specific situations where we have helped them. We have, in fact, spent every penny in that program over the last year. It does work to fill the gaps and fill the holes and to be a safety net for those who come forward. A Member has a situation of one case that didn’t work out perhaps, and I’m glad to hear that it was resolved, but by and large this program serves the purpose for which it was intended.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this case I don’t think it did work. The family had three weeks’ notice to try and pay off a $700 debt, give or take. It simply was not possible. The father was in school, the mother was on income support. I really need to ask the Minister, when an application comes forward, do the staff not look to find solutions as opposed to finding a way to deny the application?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** I can say in confidence that our staff looks to find solutions. We do not look at the application to look for a way to deny them. In fact, we have spent $62,000 more on this budget than what was allocated. I can demonstrate to you that we have spent 50 percent more than what was allocated. We look for ways to find solutions. I can give for her one example that she has 10 examples of how we have helped our residents to go back to their communities and pay off their debt. I’m saying that if in this situation the person was denied, they would have been faxed, I would have supported that, and I need the Member to tell me what the situation is.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

## QUESTION 517-16(5): PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE ASSISTANCE FOR HOMEOWNERS

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation. What support exists for homeowners in remote communities who need to replace oil tanks and wood pilings underneath their homes?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Robert McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those that find they need to replace their fuel tanks or pilings would be able to, if they qualify, access money through CARE, the home repair program.

**MR. JACOBSON:** What’s being done to educate the public about proper maintenance of oil tanks and wood pilings?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** It’s obvious that there has been some concern with the fuel tanks and, more specifically, the wood pilings. As far as public education, I would have to follow up and see what’s out there. This has been a longstanding issue, the pilings in particular, so folks out there are well aware of some of the challenges they face. The fuel tank issue is just a new one that’s been out for a bit here. There’s still a process that has to go on where we need to educate the public and make them aware of some of the challenges they face with the fuel tanks.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Does the NWT Housing Corporation plan to address the pilings that are beginning to decay for private homeownership? I think the cost for one to repair is about $1,500. I mean, some people are barely eligible to stay in those units that are being given under the programs that they fall under through the Housing Corporation. Can the Minister elaborate a little bit more on the process and what the department can do to help enhance the program to get these pilings done for the private homeownership?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Obviously, being a private homeowner, they would be responsible for the remediation of their piles. However, the Housing Corporation does offer the CARE program where, if they’re eligible, they would qualify for home repairs and get the piling work done. As far as a program designed specifically for that, it doesn’t exist right now, but clients will have an opportunity through one of the home repair programs to get the work done to their units.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Jacobson.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister consider looking at ways to increase support to homeowners in remote communities and the need to replace oil tanks and wood pilings and to enhance the programs under the NWT housing CARE program?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We’re always looking at ways that we can improve the delivery of our program. We have allocated, in the past number of years, a large amount of resources to the communities. I can stand here and quote some numbers from the Member’s constituency where one particular community received $4.7 million since 2007. Another community got about the same amount. We try and distribute the resources that we have equally. We’ve been fortunate in the last number of years with the federal investment. We’ve been able to allocate more resources. With that money being sunsetted we’re back to our historical levels, but we still recognize the importance of helping those in the communities that need assistance. I think last year we allocated about $9 million to help homeowners. This year the number is a little lower, what we’re proposing. Still we see it as our contribution to helping those that want to fix up their units. Again I will remind the Member that for those who qualify for some of the programs, there’s always the assistance in dealing with some of the issues surrounding their units.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Jacobson.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bonus question. For myself, would the Minister, for the private homeowners, like, we have some elders that are retired and the family is still working. They still say that under the last fiscal year, would the Minister reconsider looking at the pre-qualifications and opening that up with the Housing Corporation to be able to allocate more monies to the individuals in the communities?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We try to distribute our resources equally and fairly across the Northwest Territories. We have some of our smaller communities that continue to get a good portion of the money. We’re always looking at ways to allocate resources to a lot of the communities that are in need. We find we have more applications in one community than another. We’re always looking at ways we can assist our homeowners to improve the condition of their units.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

## QUESTION 518-16(5): TERRITORIAL HOTEL TAX

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member’s statement today I talked about the need for a hotel tax which is being called upon by the Hotel Association asking the Minister of Finance to create such an initiative that could help support tourism initiatives in the Northwest Territories. What is the hesitation of the Department of Finance from simply creating a hotel tax that could be targeted to help support the tourism industry?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s not an issue of hesitation. It’s an issue of getting feedback, getting some initial direction and positive response through the revenue roundtables and then mapping out the way forward. In this case, it was recommended that the ability to have a hotel tax be delegated down to the community level. The Member is talking about something for the Hotel Association. This points to the need for doing the proper work to in fact decide upon what would be the right structure. I’ve indicated in this budget that there’s not going to be any tax increases, so that work would be, if it’s being done, considered by the 17th Assembly.

**MR. HAWKINS:** The Hotel Association as well as a number of people in the tourism organizations out there all would like a hotel tax. I think they’ve been advocating for this particular type of tax for some time now. This is not a new initiative that’s been suggested. The Minister talked about downloading it maybe to further governance but I don’t think that’s the ideal approach. What conditions would the Minister of Finance need to be in place or to see supported in order to make it a territorial hotel tax?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** The Member is correct. In fact, this hotel tax initiative did come before this House back in 2000 and was not successful in being approved by this House, the concern being driving up the cost of doing business and putting an extra burden on the tourism industry. In this particular case, the Member’s line of questioning versus what we heard at the roundtable in October points to, at the very least, a need for further discussion. The Association of Communities made the request and supported the request that it be delegated, at their request, to the communities. The Member’s talking about a territorial-wide one. That alone in itself is a source of contention that would need some revision and work. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, I suspect under the Municipal Towns and Villages Act they have the ability to create a hotel tax, but that’s not exactly what they would like. They would rather see it as an across-the-board, fair, even policy created by the Finance Minister and, if anything, allow it to be targeted at tourism initiatives, that it could be a tax targeted with a special purpose.

Mr. Speaker, is there apprehension from the Department of Finance to creating a territorial tax from doing this type of initiative or do they just not want to do the work? Because as I understand it, tourism wants it and the Hotel Association supports this. I’m just trying to get a sense of what’s stopping the Department of Finance from moving on this particular initiative other than finding reasons not to. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** His statement is the first awareness that I have, the first notice that I’ve had that the Hotel Association wants a tax imposed territory-wide. Unless I’ve missed it or I’ve forgotten it, I don’t recollect hearing this specifically before. He has raised this issue for the first time in the House. There was a different approach suggested by the Association of Communities. Once again, that alone, in terms of how it would be applied, is going to require some discussion. It’s not that we’re reluctant. There’s work being done. It has been done. We’ve indicated in this budget, in the House here a couple weeks ago when I did the budget address, that there are no new taxes planned for this particular budget. If there’s going to be further work done and a decision made on a hotel tax, then that work will be carried out to fruition by the 17th Assembly. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Your final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s not my intention to break the promise of the Finance Minister when he says he’s holding the line on taxes, so he should be assured that I’m not trying to trip him up on that promise to the people of the NWT. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister of Finance be willing to come to a meeting, if I was able to arrange it, with the Hotel Association and even some municipality officials on this particular issue about creating the hotel tax initiative? That money could be targeted at the tourism industry, an industry that could use more money to help bring new dollars into our economy, which is a very important base to our overall strength of our northern business. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** As a matter of practice, I look seriously at every invitation that I get, especially ones that are put forward by Members of the Legislative Assembly, and I will, of course, give such an invitation, should it come from the Member, every full and due consideration that it deserves. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

## QUESTION 519-16(5): PROPOSED NEW WILDLIFE ACT

**MR. ABERNETHY:**  Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my Member’s statement, that we get with the Wildlife Act, the document that is right as opposed to right now. This act affects everybody in the Northwest Territories, Aboriginal hunters, non-Aboriginal hunters, harvesters, industry, transportation. In fact, every person who goes outside is affected or will be affected by the Wildlife Act.

My question to the Minister is: what is the urgency? Why don’t we wait, go back out, talk to those people who have concerns, get the information and put forward an act that is right? We need to delay this, Mr. Speaker, so will the Minister commit to taking it off the table for March and putting it back on the table for maybe May or August? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** No, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ABERNETHY:**  Wow, an answer. I really, really kind of like that. That’s, I think, the first one I’ve gotten from the Minister in three and a half years. But I will go back, Mr. Speaker. I mean, clearly there are issues and concerns out there with respect to this Wildlife Act. It needs to be thoroughly invested and thoroughly reviewed. The Minister hasn’t been able to provide any assurances that the people’s voices are heard. What is the Minister going to do, and I’ve asked this question before, but what is he going to do to make sure that these people’s voices are heard before we put this act in front of the House for consideration, Mr. Speaker?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the Member that he’s received many answers from me over the life of this Assembly; he just may not have liked them all. That does not consist not getting an answer.

In this particular case, we have done consultation. There was a publication sent out in 2009 that laid out all the main principles, proposed changes followed since that time with ongoing consultation. This act is a good act. I think it meets the test and I will also submit to this House that no matter what assurances I would provide to the Member except delaying and killing the bill, would not satisfy him with his insatiable focus on process. Thank you.

**MR. ABERNETHY:**  I think the Minister’s putting some words in my mouth. I have no interest whatsoever in killing this bill and I’ve been pretty clear along those lines ever since we started having conversation. I am concerned about process, because we are a public government, Mr. Speaker. We must be transparent in everything we do. We must be accountable for our actions. In this case, I don’t believe the public consultation is particularly transparent or accountable. I’ve heard from representatives from the Government of the Northwest Territories, members of his own department, members from ITI, members from other departments with concerns about this act. I’ve heard from industry. I’ve heard from the Chamber of Mines. I’ve heard from the NWT Wildlife Federation. I have heard from people on the street that have concerns. There are many, many people out there who are frustrated and concerned about this process. All I’m asking is let’s go back and give these organizations an opportunity to have a conversation with the Minister and his department to solve some of these issues that they have, to make sure that their voices are heard. I’m not suggesting that he agree with them. It’s okay to disagree, but it’s not okay to ignore, and that’s what I feel is happening in this situation.

I would like the Minister to not ignore these industries, not ignore these organizations, not ignore our people, Mr. Speaker, and go out and listen to them. If it takes a little bit more time, it takes a little bit more time. Mr. Speaker, to the Minister: what is the harm in waiting? What is the harm in getting the input from these people and providing them with reasonable expectation or reasonable certainty that they have been heard? What is the harm, Mr. Speaker?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I believe at the end of the day we will have addressed the majority of concerns of the groups that Member keeps referring to. I mean, I’ve seen the correspondence, I’ve seen the various iterations of the act, I’ve looked at the changes, so I’m confident that we have done the work necessary to bring this act to the House. It gets first and second reading and then it will go to committee, then the committee will have an opportunity to take in on the road to consult, which will be another opportunity to come back before third reading to see what other further changes may be necessary and agreed to.

The Member well knows that this has been a priority of this Assembly; it’s been a priority since almost 1990 when the issue first came up. Some groups have been waiting 27 years to have their land claims reflected in this act, some 18 years. This act is seriously out of date and the Member knows on the timelines before us that his talk about what is the harm, let’s just delay this, is that this bill would not see the light of day in this government and it would be the new government and a year or two years or depends how successful the Member would be in terms of process, maybe sometime not even in the life of the 17th Assembly to finally hit the floor of this Assembly. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Your final supplementary, Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:**  Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I disagree with the Minister. I think it won’t need a significant amount of time. It needs time to guarantee that the people have been heard. His argument is convenient but not particularly practical. We need to get out there, Mr. Speaker. People on the street are saying it and I don’t know how the Minister is missing it, quite frankly. It’s in the paper, it’s on the street. People are talking about it. People are concerned. A delay and giving these organizations reasonable opportunity to have the conversation with the Minister, and like I said, not necessarily agree, but are certain that they’ve been heard is enough. He didn’t really answer the question. I’m curious; what is the harm in delaying this until we get the input and the confidence that he and his department haven’t heard? It’s not there, Mr. Speaker. What is the harm?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just in our own political timeline, this particular session will go to the 7th of March. There will be a prorogation and on the 7th of March there will be a new session starting which will be an opportunity to bring into the House this bill and other legislation for first and second reading which gives the committee 120 days to do their work and report back to the House, which means in all probability the last session in August. If, in fact, we wait until May or June, then we will totally miss any opportunity in the life of this government to bring this bill to the floor of the House. This has been identified as a priority and the intention is to give notice on March 7th for first reading on the 9th. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

## QUESTION 520-16(5): FOUNDATION FOR CHANGE

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions today for the Minister of Health and Social Services getting back to my Member’s statement where I talked about planning for the future of health care in the Northwest Territories. How is the Minister planning to move the Foundation for Change along and introduce it to the public here in the Northwest Territories as the answer for what ails our health care system here in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member knows, since the Foundation for Change action plan was unveiled in 2009, it was made clear that it is a three-year action plan. It is one of the important foundation documents that we are using to change our system and to make our system work together as a system and work better. Mr. Speaker, since that, we have had regional dialogues in every region of the Northwest Territories. We have had them on the website. I have made numerous statements in the Assembly. Mr. Speaker, we have been doing a lot of work to disseminate the information within the system and out. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, the Foundation for Change was unveiled in 2009, as the Minister stated. I know the Standing Committee on Social Programs has been updated a couple of times on the Foundation for Change. When will the next update be coming on the Foundation for Change? When might the committee and Members of this government... Is this government actually going to act on any of the findings of the recommendations from the Foundation for Change? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, at the request of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, we submitted about a 50-page draft document, a work plan status update about a week or 10 days ago. I am sure the Member could get a copy of that if he would like. I could provide him with that. That is also being posted on our website. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, I spoke earlier of the need for capital dollars and especially in the area of health care. I am wondering what planning is going into trying to look to the future needs capital requirements for our health care system, particularly Stanton Hospital which I mentioned is probably going to need a major capital retrofit in the very near future, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, the Member knows that we have a capital planning process. We just approved our capital budget last fall. In that was money for planning for Stanton Territorial Health Authority. In our meeting this morning in the committee, the Member was advised that the work that we are going to be doing -- and the CEO and the public administrator of the authority have advised the committee as well -- for Stanton has to be in line with the work that we are doing in our regional health centres. What we are going to be delivering in Hay River, Fort Smith, Norman Wells and Inuvik will have much to say about the next phase of capital planning for the Stanton Hospital. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We did have, at the beginning of this government, a small amount of capital money, not that $28 million is a small amount of money, but that was earmarked for Stanton Territorial Hospital for a master development plan. That money, under the Minister’s watch, vanished into thin air. Mr. Speaker, again, we don’t just pull $250 million together. We have to come up with a plan to address the capital needs at that hospital. That planning has to start now, Mr. Speaker. What planning is going into today to try to find money for tomorrow that we are going to need to get that capital retrofit done at that hospital? That planning has to start now, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, the planning has started and the Member knows that. He has to update his thinking on the basis of information he gets. The $28 million or whatever million that was in Stanton, that was from the old capital planning process which this Assembly has rejected. In the old ways of doing that, X dollars would be put into a budget and then people design afterwards, but we changed that system in 2007-08, Mr. Speaker. Now we have to do a planning study and you have to go through a peer review. You have to have level B estimate before it will get on the books. There is in the budget for planning for Stanton Territorial Hospital. The work is progressing. The Member is entirely accurate and not taking into consideration the new information he received this morning to say that somehow the money disappeared and he doesn’t know anything about it, because I submit to you, he approved the capital budget for the last three years and he knows exactly what happened.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

## QUESTION 521-16(5): FAMILY VIOLENCE

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. I would like to start with questions on family violence since, of course, women bear the huge brunt of this tragedy. My first question is on the Centre for Northern Families. The Minister has had time to research my questions of last Monday. What is your plan for action this week to save this crucial haven for wounded families? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for the Status of Women, Ms. Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Centre for Northern Families received funding from the government from various envelopes, but the main funder is Education, Culture and Employment, because they get funding for the best spaces that they have there. ECE has been taking the lead in reviewing the program. We continue to talk to the management of the centre to find options. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Mr. Speaker, so much again for cross-departmental coordination in this government. My second question is related to the Coalition Against Family Violence which has been our most successful partnership for combating family violence. Will the Minister commit to reporting to this Assembly next week on the outcomes of this meeting either by her own Minister’s statement or by offering a timely briefing in the House and being prepared to answer our questions? Mahsi.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, yes, I can commit to do that. We just have to report on their meeting. As the Member stated, they would like to see some stability in the funding. As the Member knows, we have increased the funding under the enhanced community services over the last number of years. This year we are funding $482,000 instead of $460,000 last year. We are going forward for a request for a little bit more for next year. We have also increased funding under stabilized existing shelters by $11,000 this year; actually, $119,000 this year. We have funded $450,000 this year compared to $340,000 last year and also, since 2009-10, this year we have funded $92,000 for a program for men who abuse and that is an increase of almost $70,000 from last year. Mr. Speaker, I believe we are making progress and doing things that the coalition would like us to do. I am going to review in detail what the coalition is suggesting and, as always, work with the coalition in moving forward. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the Minister. I look forward to further and detailed report on that meeting. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has outlined a bunch of figures about a bunch of dollars thrown out there. What has been achieved in the area of family violence reduction through the action plan during the life of this Assembly? Mahsi.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you. I can tell you that increasing money under the stabilizing existing shelters has really helped the shelters in Hay River, Inuvik and Yellowknife. I say that because they have told me that they were very glad to get that money. They were able to renovate some of the facilities to make them more safe and more comfortable for those who are staying there, and in fact that’s probably why the coalition is asking us to make that funding permanent.

We have introduced programming money for communities without shelters because that was identified as one that we had to move on, and in the last three years we have approved $460,000 in ‘08-09, $460,000 in ‘09 and ’10, and this year we budgeted $482,000 and for next year we’re going for more money, I mean, subject to all of the other pressures. There are lots of groups that identified on working on prevention and working with men who abuse, because when you’re talking about shelters and victims that’s not getting at the front-end, which is the reason why we have established and we are funding the program to deal with women who abuse. There has been an enormous amount of training for the shelter workers. We’ve done surveys, we’ve done evaluations. There’s all kinds of stuff going on under the Family Violence Action Plan. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Your final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I appreciate the comments from the Minister. It sounds like there’s some good work happening out there and I’m happy to see the work going on with those that abuse. Strictly speaking, of course, that’s not prevention. That’s dealing with the symptoms again. We need to get out in front of this and I hope that the Minister and colleagues will be innovative in doing some real preventative work.

My last question, Mr. Speaker, is on policing. Again, in this efficient cross-departmental government, will this Minister work with her colleagues in Finance and Justice to present a plan to committee and this Assembly to bring policing to all communities within the next few years? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** I’d be happy to speak to my colleague, the Minister of Justice, on that issue, understanding, of course, funding of extra RCMP is a project between the GNWT and the federal government for the funding of the officers. I just wanted to mention on prevention, for example -- and this is definitely in the area of prevention that the Member appreciates -- we have enhanced the community-based outreach advocacy and prevention in three regions with our shelters in the Tlicho, Deh Cho and Sahtu to raise the awareness in the community. We have also supported protocol development to assess risks and as a common risk assessment tool based on Ontario domestic assault risk assessment across the NWT. So we do do prevention work, to answer the question. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

## QUESTION 522-16(5): PLANNING FOR RETROFIT OF STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wasn’t going to ask any more questions, but I can’t resist. I’m going to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services a few more questions, getting back to the questions I had earlier. I’ll try to keep the questions pretty straightforward. What planning has gone into a retrofit, a complete retrofit of Stanton Territorial Hospital to date? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to repeat the officials that work with us in this area, and the Member was there with me this morning, the management of our health care delivery system is saying that before we decide and work on details about what to do with Stanton Territorial Hospital, we need to decide what we’re going to do there. What’s it going to be? What is Stanton going to deliver? What do we want it to do? As you know, capital planning is not just about building a building, because, as the official said, if we just go the way we’ve done before, we’re just going to build based on the old school and as the Member might know, when Stanton Hospital was built 30 years ago, even before they opened the door the building was outdated. From the day it was opened, the building was not designed to deliver the programs that it was required to deliver. We don’t want to make that mistake.

So we want to make sure that we only deliver at Stanton the only acute care services that it can deliver in Yellowknife. As much as possible, we want to optimize the use of the Hay River hospital that’s being retrofitted, the wellness centre and new health facility that we’re going to build in Norman Wells, which is in the books. We believe the Inuvik Hospital is overbuilt and we’re not using it to the max and we want to use that. To do that we need to do the staffing model, the program model, program review, use of technology. There’s a lot of work that needs to be done. We are finishing the retrofit in Smith. So, Mr. Speaker, in the interest of doing the right thing and using the money right, we are doing an enormous amount of planning, because when Stanton Hospital is retrofitted we want it to be the modern health facility that does exactly what it’s meant to do and not one thing more. That is that it is efficiently built and effectively used. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you. I don’t think the hospital was ever designed to be an office building and that’s probably the first problem. I’d like to ask the Minister, and I know and I appreciate that all this lead-up work has to be done, that has to be done, Mr. Speaker. My point is the capital plan -- and the Minister knows this, she’s been around here for almost 12 years -- that takes time. Getting money in that plan takes time. You’ve already had the Foundation for Change in place for two years. You’ve had two years. You say you’re working through all these things. When is the process to get all those things addressed going to match up with us getting the capital dollars required to build or retrofit that Stanton Territorial Hospital? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you. The breaking news is it has begun. So I don’t know why he keeps asking when is this going to start. That was the entire discussion this morning. He has a nasty habit of not changing his view in the face of good and current information. So the breaking news: planning has begun. There is money in the budget for planning for Stanton. I believe it’s about $900,000. The PA and the CEO and an entire health care team are working on how to make that facility work. So we will do that work, and when it’s ready it would go to peer review and follow the regular planning process. We believe it will take at least two or three years and it’s on its way. Work is being done. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 8, written questions. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

# Written Questions

## WRITTEN QUESTION 24-16(5): COST OF WILDLIFE ACT CONSULTATIONS

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

Of the millions of dollars in expense referred to in the Minister’s February 14, 2011, reply to Oral Question 441-16(5), what have been the costs incurred for revision of the Wildlife Act during its 54 revisions over the last 17 years for consultations, travel, legal services and legislative drafting with each of the two interest communities:

* 1. aboriginal groups and/or governments and treaty holders;
  2. those without Aboriginal and treaty rights.

Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 4-16(5), Executive Summary of the Report of the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project; Tabled Document 30-16(5), 2010 Review of Members’ Compensation and Benefits; Tabled Document 38-16(5), Supplementary Health Benefits – What We Heard; Tabled Document 62-16(5), Northwest Territories Water Stewardship Strategy; Tabled Document 75-16(5), Response to the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project on the Federal and Territorial Governments’ Interim Response to “Foundation for a Sustainable Northern Future”; Tabled Document 103-16(5), GNWT Contracts Over $5,000 Report, Year Ending March 31, 2010; Tabled Document 133-16(5), NWT Main Estimates 2011-2012; Tabled Document 135-16(5), Response to the Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act; Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act; Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Conflict of Interest Act; Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Fire Prevention Act; Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act; Bill 18, An Act to Repeal the Settlements Act; Bill 19, Municipal Statutes Amendment Act; Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Evidence Act; Minister’s Statement 65-16(5), Devolution Agreement-in-Principle, Impact on Land Claims and Protection of Aboriginal Rights; Minister’s Statement 88-16(5), Sessional Statement, with Mr. Bromley in the chair.

By the authority given me as Speaker by Motion 31-16(5), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider the business before the House.

# Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** I’d like to call Committee of the Whole to order. We have before us the consideration of tabled documents 4, 30, 38, 62, 75, 103, 133, 135; Bills 4, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20; and Ministers’ statements 65 and 88. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee would like to continue with the Department of Transportation followed by Industry, Tourism and Investment, and also Human Resources today.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. We will continue, then, with Tabled Document 133-16(5), NWT Main Estimates, 2011-2012, and continue with Environment and Natural Resources. Is committee agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** So let’s see. We were on page… Thank you, committee. Actually, I guess we did complete ENR and we’re on the Department of Transportation. That’s right. We had the general comments yesterday. It must have been late last night. At any rate, what we’ll do is take a quick break and come back to it.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** I’d like to call Committee of the Whole to order. We are on the Department of Transportation. I would like to ask the Minister if he will be bringing witnesses into the House. Mr. Minister.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Yes, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. I would ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort the witnesses into the House.

I’d like to ask the Minister to please introduce his witnesses.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** With me on my right I have Mr. Russell Neudorf, the deputy minister of Transportation. On my left I have Mr. Daniel Auger, the assistant deputy minister of Transportation.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Committee, we were on general comments. I’m sure that we totally finished them. Are there any more general comments before I ask the Minister to respond? Seeing none, I’d like to ask the Minister to please respond to general comments.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I’d like to thank the Members for the comments they’ve made and the concerns they’ve raised. The comments around the Deh Cho Bridge, of course, have been consistent. The project is a very massive undertaking from a government standpoint and probably one of the biggest projects in the Northwest Territories at this point. The project initially was put together with concerns to address a number of concerns that were being raised, concerns of safety, concerns of potential environment contamination, concerns over greenhouse gas, and of course to remove the bottleneck that has been challenging the traffic on the north side of the river for many years now. The P3 project that was initially undertaken to address it was faced with a number of challenges. Of course today we are in a position where we have this project as part of our projects that are being developed and delivered by the Government of the Northwest Territories. I just wanted to speak to some of the issues that were raised by the MLAs regarding the bridge first, and then some general comments on others.

First of all I wanted to state that the concern over wording is something that we should be clear about. Words that were used initially on how we reported revenues and expenses that were acceptable under the concession agreement are, now that our reporting is different because this is a government project we are using different terms. When we speak -- and Mr. Ramsay raised the concern of my use of “cost savings” on the project -- we should be clear that what I was referring to was cost savings that would be incurred from no longer having to operate the ferry or construct the ice bridge on an annual basis. Of course, under the whole process with the concession agreement, the savings would have been used to pay off the interest and principal of the bridge debt. Now these revenues of course are part of our expenses.

The use of a special purpose fund that was required under the concession agreement was of course not going to be required. We can’t confuse revenues with profits. We will be using different terminology. We are now required to include the expenses and our revenues as part of our budgeting process and will be reporting through the mains as we present our budgets.

There has also been indication that a report undertaken by the Auditor General will be tabled in this House on March 1st and we look forward to that. We have worked very closely with the Auditor General. I have to say that given that we have now undertaken to build the Deh Cho Bridge as a government project, having also to do a forensic audit or an audit of this nature has really stretched our resources and has caused a lot of work on our already very busy staff.

We still continue to work on issues that were raised by a number of our colleagues here in the House on the opening date. We still have that as a target. Of course, it’s something that we have to work very hard with the contractors to continue to work and try to deal with all the challenges that are put before us. The cost is also an issue that we’re very much mindful of as we move forward. There are a lot of things that are happening on the bridge project. Construction is moving forward. We’re happy with the progress over the last little while. We would expect that’s going to continue.

We also heard from Mr. Abernethy the concerns he brought forward and some of his desires to see the Mackenzie Valley Highway continue to move forward. We’re quite happy that we were able to sign agreements with all the different Aboriginal governments and groups along the highway route. Many of the project description reports are to a stage where they should be signed off in the next little while. There are others that have been just undertaken and they will take a little bit longer. We had given ourselves a two-year time frame, however things are progressing well. We’re quite happy with the work that has been done on that front.

To the comment about having further chipsealing done or paving, we certainly agree that we need to do more. I think I indicated last year that it’s our desire to do a lot more chipsealing. We think it’s a good way to preserve the highway service except it’s very costly at this point to deal with some of the roads that are further north. We’re looking at ways that we can improve that. At this point we have roughly 35 percent of our highways in the NWT that are chipsealed.

We also agree very much that we need to continue to improve our highway infrastructure. This is something that the tourism traffic has made comments about. A number of Members have raised it. We are working to try to accommodate that. There is concern on Highway No. 7 regarding the condition. We’ve had some serious challenges on that front with some of the spring conditions where the road has collapsed and some of the road has eroded. We have over the last three years now tried to budget accordingly to deal with the reconstruction, but given that there’s been some challenges in erosion and sinkholes, we’ve had to divert some of our dollars. So it doesn’t allow us to move forward as fast as we’d like.

We heard also from Mr. Jacobson regarding the road concerns regarding progress of the Mackenzie Valley Highway. In his riding the road has moved fairly... The project description for that stretch of road has moved forward very quickly. Things have progressed very well and we’re hoping that things in the other parts of the Northwest Territories will go forward as well.

He’s also raised concerns over dust suppression. We agree that it’s a safety issue and that we need to deal with dust suppression. We will continue to put investment to try to alleviate those conditions. Right now, chipseal on the Dempster is something that we need to look at and there are other parts of the Territories that have made the same request.

Mr. Krutko has raised issues about bridges in this House for a number of years now and he’s made it very clear that he’s a firm believer that bridges would not only provide year-round access to the communities but would lower the cost of the pipeline. At this point, the pipeline project does not include a road. We have had discussions with the proponent and voiced our desire to see further roads be constructed parallel to this process. At this point, it’s not as part of the project and I can’t see an indication that that would happen.

We have had good progress also on the road and the PDR work that’s been done on the alignment and engineering assessments on the Mackenzie Valley Highway project. The contract there is going very well. It’s almost done and we hope to conclude that in a positive light.

The Peel River schedule is something else that was raised. We certainly are willing to sit down and discuss schedules. As long as it doesn’t warrant further investment, we feel we can change the time from in the morning to the mid-morning if that’s the desire of the community; however, we have not engaged in those discussions and would like to do so. We have some time to be able to have that discussion with the community and we’ll have our staff do that.

Mr. Hawkins was very clear in his points about getting the bridge project done and we share the same sentiment. We need to keep moving forward. This project is there for the long term and we have, of course, tried to do that. We want to see this project get completed. However, we have to do it in a way that we don’t compromise on the quality of construction or any areas of safety.

He’s also raised concern about the condition of Highway No. 3 and some of the issues that are coming forward as a result of climate change and of our ice melting and causing some driving conditions. I drive that road every weekend. Of course, it’s a safe road. I can vouch for that. We certainly would like to see some of the issues that are causing some of the slumping on the road dealt with, but it’s certainly still a safe road if you’re driving it at the driving speeds set.

Mr. Yakeleya raised several issues that were of concern in his riding and we certainly agree that we’ve, in the last two governments, made significant investment in the Mackenzie Valley winter road that has resulted in a lot of improvements. We’ve done a number of bridges in his riding on the winter road and the communities have been very clear to us that it’s something that they’re happy with; however, they still want us to work towards continuing the season when they have the ability to travel south. The quality of the roads is getting better and has been this year. We’ve received a number of comments stating to that; however, we should point out that there is no oil and gas activity in the Sahtu this year and I think we all would agree that this has resulted in roads that are of better quality. It really points to the fact that when we do have resource development or companies in the area, that they work with us and pay their share to keep the road in good condition.

We have been very busy across the Northwest Territories working with most of the local companies in the area, with the Aboriginal companies or the Aboriginal groups, and the Sahtu has been pretty clear in getting their message to us that they have a short season as to when they can do construction work and for the rest of the season their equipment has to sit while still requiring payment. We recognize that and I think we’ve done a good job across the board. We’ve set a goal to work with communities and work with companies, northern companies, and we’re starting to see some success and we’re starting to see a lot of good work happening from these companies.

We also have been trying to deal with a number of issues that have come forward or have been issues of safety on the winter road. I think with all the grade work and the bridging that we have done, it has alleviated some of those concerns. We have also installed in the last couple of years, I should say, we planned to install quite a few signs. We did 700 last year. We plan to do another 700 on this road. This is still a fairly long winter road and we may need to do more. We also have brought to the attention the issue of the Bear River Bridge that the Member has raised on a number of occasions. It’s a project that’s ready to go, we just need to have some buy-in from the federal government. We certainly have tried to do our share to open up the winter crossings on the Bear and the bypass at Tulita by putting a little more dollars to get those done.

Mr. Yakeleya also raised a question on what would be in the federal budget for the Mackenzie Valley Highway. I had indicated earlier in this House that that’s something we’ll have to wait and see. I had some discussions with Minister Strahl. He was very clear that he couldn’t give us an answer and we would have to wait.

Mr. Chairman, there are a number of issues that were raised here, there are probably a number of further issues that will be brought up regarding our budget that’s in front of us today, and we look forward to any questions as we move along on this year’s budget.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Does committee agree that this concludes general comments?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Does committee agree that we go to detail?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** On page 11-7 are the operations expenditure summary for Transportation. We’ll defer that until after consideration of the details. Please turn to page 8 and we’ll start there with Transportation, information item, infrastructure investment summary. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 11-9, Transportation, information item, revenue summary. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 11-10. Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:**  Thank you, Mr. Chair. Actually, I did have one question and I just about missed it. This is the revenue summary. Theoretically, the bridge will be operational in November, which means that there are four months that we might expect revenue. Am I just missing it or is it on this page somewhere?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Does committee agree we go back to page 11-9?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Minister McLeod.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chair, yes, the Member’s correct. The process that has been put forward for the bridge project, as requirements from Finance, is to incorporate the expenses into the mains for this year and as we move forward with actual on revenue, we will come forward in the form of a supp. In the following years, it will be recorded on this page.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you for that clarification, Minister. Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Once again, committee, Transportation, information item, revenue summary. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you. We are moving forward to page 11-10, Transportation, information item, active position summary. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you. We are moving on to page 11-13, Transportation, activity summary, corporate services, operations expenditure summary, $10.063 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you. Page 11-14. Transportation, information item, corporate services, active positions. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you. Page 11-17. Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yellowknife has a territorial airport, the largest one in the Northwest Territories where most product coming in by airplane lands first, often. There is a lot of talk about economic opportunities and where we are going as a Territory in the future. I think an airport like the Yellowknife Airport can play a significant role in our future, but it would require some lengthening and some work so that we can land larger planes, international planes which would allow us to bring in planes from Japan or Germany which would support tourism but it would allow larger planes bringing up product and supply which could help industry as industry is moving forward.

We need to support industry and Transportation has a role in supporting business opportunities and the economy in the Northwest Territories. For years, Edmonton was known as the gateway to the North. It isn’t necessarily appropriate anymore. I think Yellowknife could be the gateway to the North. Is there much in the way or any planning work being done to capture and take advantage of some of the opportunities that exist economically by way of making our runways in Yellowknife a little longer, a little bit more appropriate for larger international airlines?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Minister McLeod.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is an issue that has been discussed a number of times over the years. We have also continued to engage on those discussions with different agencies, including our tourism folks in NWT. We have identified this as a potential project in our Airport Development Plan that we have for the long-term strategy. Right now we still haven’t put together a business case that would warrant an extension. Of course, we are interested. We just don’t have it ready to be brought forward at this point. It would still require a lot of discussion and being able to demonstrate it is required and it is viable. Thank you.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you for that. I hope that the department keeps moving forward on that. Just for the record, we talked about tourism. I am interested in tourism. You mentioned tourism, but tourism is not the only area that would benefit from an extended runway. Exploration in the Northwest Territories, mining in the Northwest Territories could all benefit from a more or longer and more substantial runway. This is more of just a comment, but I think work does need to be done in this area.

In light of the fact that we just signed an agreement-in-principle, we are moving forward with devolution. Our future looks fairly bright in the industrial sense, mining, resource, extraction done responsibly. There is nothing wrong with planning a bit ahead and being ready for when those opportunities present themselves. The benefits of devolution probably are still years off, but they are coming. There is no time like the present to be ready. There is no time like the present to start your planning. I would strongly encourage the department to not let this one slide. This is a huge opportunity for the North by way of greater access to the North. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, there are a number of benefits that could be brought forward and pointed to as the discussion moves forward on lengthening the airport runways. Right now the domestic flights we feel are okay. It would be probably a desire to have the polar flights have the ability to land at our airports and take off from the airport. Right now they can land but they would have to restrict their weight as they left. That is the challenge. We still need to be able to put the business case together. We need to be able to demonstrate the need. I am not sure if we can do that at this point and whether we as a department are ready. I would say we are. We have the land, we have the plan, we just need to be able to build a business case that would be acceptable to all. It would require significant investment and, of course, there is the challenge of dealing with all our needs across the Territories. Once we can put all the components that are required to build a business case, I am sure this would be able to move forward relatively quickly. Thank you.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Mr. Chairman, I look forward to hearing more.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Committee, we are on page 11-17, Transportation, activity summary, airports, operations expenditure, $29.033 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you. Page 11-18, Transportation, activity summary, airports, grants and contributions, contributions, $30,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you. Page 11-19, Transportation, information item, airports, active positions. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you. Page 11-21, Transportation. Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Some of this is going to sound the same. Like I said before, Transportation plays a key role in our economic future. Transportation and opening up our communities is super important to our ability to have a strong economy; strong, healthy people. Highways are obviously a critical aspect just like our airports. One area that I mentioned in my opening comments or opening comments on your general remarks on your opening comments was the Deh Cho loop. I have driven it. It was a wonderful drive. Fortunately, I think I was driving at the one time of year that the Liard Highway was good, because all I hear is really bad stories about the Liard Highway. I will admit right up front I took a Yaris down it and it was okay, but I heard people driving four-by-fours three weeks later were getting their cars destroyed on the same road. Clearly I got lucky. But it is a wonderful road. It is a wonderful opportunity. The land is beautiful. There is a lot to see.

If we were to invest some additional time and money in finishing the link between Simpson and Liard, we would have a second access point, a second quality access point to the Northwest Territories, or North Slave and South Slave anyway, which would be great for tourism. It would allow those communities greater access to affordable goods, because a different quality of trucks would be able to use the road. I sure would like to see more progress made in that area. It would be a benefit for the whole Northwest Territories.

I understand it is not as simple as capping a road. I understand that that road needs... They have significant work right down to its base. I am wondering what the timeline is on and what type of planning is currently underway by highways to upgrade that road so it is a more reasonable link into the South and North Slave regions.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Minister McLeod.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, the concept of having the Deh Cho loop is a good one and certainly something that we support. The road is a part of our Territory that is very scenic. There is a lot of wildlife in the area and it’s still virtually very pristine. However, during the spring months, during the spring thaw we have many challenges as the road becomes very wet. There are issues with drainage and we have a very poor sub-grade. It was a road that was built many years ago and it’s at a point in its life where it needs to be reconstructed and we have undertaken to start that process. We’re on our third year of investment and making headway has been very difficult as we’ve seen the road slump and deteriorate in some areas that are not part of our construction plan and has required us to redirect our investment into those areas.

As to how many years it would take to do the whole loop that is a difficult one to answer. I can only speak for the time that I’m here and what’s in this budget, and it would really be conditional as what’s available for investment and what the priorities are for the next government and future governments. Thank you.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thanks to the Minister for that. I would encourage the Minister, as part of transition planning, to put some additional attention on that within the department and continue work and the good work that you’re doing to upgrade that road so it is a reasonable road.

My second question is what is DOT, the Department of Transportation, doing to work with industry and Aboriginal governments to improve winter road access to both the Tlicho communities as well as the North Slave Geological Province? Both of these are economic; the cost of living in communities, but also resource extraction and development and industry in the Slave Geological Province. So who are we working with, what are we doing to improve these links so that we don’t have to worry as much about things such as a warm winter season and short life of winter roads?

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I hear the Member’s request for us to keep moving forward on the Highway No. 7 portion of the Deh Cho loop. We have all intentions of doing that. We are hoping to have all our engineering requirements that would give us a better ability to develop a long-term strategic plan for improvements on the road. We also, as part of the Deh Cho loop have done quite a bit of work on Highway No. 1 in terms of upgrading, reconstruction and also chipsealing. We’d like to continue that and that would really enhance a good part of what’s considered the Deh Cho loop.

We are also working in the area of the Tlicho region and the focus has been to realign the winter road in that area. Right now the road is constructed mainly on the lakes and a lot of river crossings, and it’s our desire to move the winter road onto land rather than water. We have set up a steering committee with the Tlicho communities, the leaders. We had all intentions to be a lot further than we were. However, during the last government there was a request for us to stop all work that was being considered for the Tlicho winter roads, and we did oblige the government-of-the-day and have since had everybody back in the room and had some good discussions on moving forward and we have not engaged our study process and that’s now being done. That, again, will be used for consideration as we decide what investment will be made and how much money we’re going to require. Thank you.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you and thanks to the Minister for that. I remember the discussions about the Tlicho and I’m happy to see that they’re back at the table and that progress is being made in that area. I think those realignments will ultimately help reduce the cost of living in those communities, which is a priority of this government. So thank you for that and please keep going.

The second part of the question, which I didn’t hear a response to, was winter road realignment up to the North Slave Geological Province. In 2006 we lost the winter roads early, which resulted in significant costs to the mines that are in that area. Now I believe that there’s been some talk about realignment, there’s been some talk about an extension to extend the winter road season in the North Slave Geological Province, which would open it up a little bit more for responsible development. I’m wondering what progress is being made in that area and has the department been having any conversations with the federal government about possibly partnering or doing something to extend the winter road life in that area specifically by realigning on land as opposed to water.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** I apologize for missing the question. I wasn’t clear on that area of questioning. Mr. Chairman, we have undertaken to access some dollars from the federal government through the P3 Canada Program to do an assessment and a study of a portion of the winter road for consideration for realignment. That process is already underway and we are in the position where we’ve put out an RFP to do a study on this section of road.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** That must be the RFP that came out today. There was something in contract opportunities that came out today for a seasonal overland road financing option study in the Slave Geological Province. I’m assuming that that’s what you’re talking about. You can answer that when we’re done.

The second thing is I know that Yellowknives Dene and other groups are interested in helping or participating in some capacity to build capacity of their own on some of this winter road realignment and future of transportation in the North Slave Geological Province. Have any partnerships been weighed with the Yellowknives Dene or Deton’Cho with respect to helping them build capacity so that they can be involved in the future of the North Slave Geological Province, transportation in the North Slave Geological Province?

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, the answer that the Member is referencing has been part of the Slave Geological Study is correct. That’s the contract that I was referring to and, yes, we do have members of the Yellowknives Dene First Nations working with us in consideration of this project. They have representation on the steering committee and we’re also, of course, as you know, Mr. Chairman, we have been talking to the Yellowknives Dene on doing some partnership project work that needs to be done on the Dettah access road.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Committee, we’re on page 11-21, Transportation, activity summary, highways, operations expenditure summary, $58.094 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 11-22, Transportation, activity summary, highways, grants and contributions, grant, $96,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 11-23, Transportation, information item, highways, active positions. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 11-25, Transportation, activity summary, marine, operations expenditure summary, $7.976 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 11-26, Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Can I go back to 11-25, Mr. Chair?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Does committee agree that we go back to page 11-25?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:**  Thank you, Mr. Chair. In this section I just want to highlight comments from my colleague Mrs. Groenewegen when she was talking about access into the Hay River. Under this section, I know this is mostly ferries, ferry operations and whatnot, but is there any capacity within this division to work with Hay River to partner with the federal government or any other partners about possibly dredging that channel to increase the transportation links out of Hay River? The shallower that gets the more difficult it is for significantly-sized boats to get in and out. Does this division have any responsibility or any ability to leverage, partner or work with any group to get that channel dredged or is this completely just ferry operations?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Minister McLeod.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, the dredging issue really doesn’t fall under our mandate as the department. However, having said that, we have concerns in this area as it has impacts to many areas of different sectors of the North. We have the marine traffic and the fishermen that are voicing concern. There’s also the issue with the municipality on some concerns that the island that’s being created in the middle of the river is causing or is certainly not helping with the flooding issues that are happening on the Hay River and to the municipality of Hay River and also to the Hay River Reserve.

We have engaged with several departments now to bring this issue to their attention. We’ve had some discussion with the Coast Guard and they’ve indicated that there is a desire to look at it. As of yet there have not been any dollars identified. We have done some studies on their behalf to look at how serious the issue is. There may be more work that needs to be done to assess the situation. We want to keep pressing this issue. We did raise it with Minister Strahl and he indicated he would bring it to the attention of Gail Shea, the Minister responsible for dealing with this issue, and we will continue to have these discussions in the next while.

**MR. ABERNETHY:**  Thanks to the Minister for that. Obviously, as per its name, Hay River is a transportation hub and that river has access to the lake and, therefore, access to the Mackenzie River is critical as far as transportation links go in the Northwest Territories. I’m happy to hear that the Minister is attempting to do something in this area and I encourage him to keep doing so. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have one question here. In terms of the bridge and the opening of the bridge and then the cessation of the ferry and/or the ice road, can the Minister advise how long the ferry or the ice road construction will continue on after the bridge is open? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister McLeod.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** There would be no need for the ferry or the ice road once the bridge is open.

**MS. BISARO:** Okay. So I guess that means when the ribbon is cut then the operations cease. Is that right? Thanks.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** I believe that’s correct. Would you like to confirm that, Minister?

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Agreed, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Any further questions on page 11-25, committee? Transportation, activity summary, marine, operations expenditure summary, $7.976 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 11-26, Transportation, information item, marine, active positions. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 11-29, Transportation, activity summary, community access program, operations expenditure summary. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It’s a minor amount of money but I was struck by the $20,000 in travel on this page. When it’s, I don’t know, 99 percent grants and contributions I wondered why we have a travel expense. If I could get an explanation. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister McLeod.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, the money that’s allocated in this budget line is for airfare, for any air charters, accommodations, meals or incidentals. There is, and have been, communities that have requested us to come into the community to either explain the program, to assist with some of the technical areas, to ask for advice or to help them put the proposal together. A portion of these dollars are earmarked for that service.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. We’re on page 11-29, Transportation, activity summary, community access program, operations expenditure summary, $1.008 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 11-30. Transportation, activity summary, community access program, grants and contributions, contributions, $980,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 11-33. Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:**  Not really so much a question but a pat on the back. Early in the life of this Assembly I gave the Minister a fairly hard time about the road licensing office here in Yellowknife and how it was so incredibly frustrating going there. I recently went and got my new licence and it was a great experience. The way you’ve got that office structured now is a lot more ergonomic. It makes sense. Yes, the lines are still long, but it’s a lot clearer. So I’d like to pat the Minister on the back for some good work in that area and thanks for making that a more pleasurable experience than it was in the past. Granted, yes, the line-ups are still too long, but, you know, I was born in January and apparently a lot of other people were too. Just a comment.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Any response, Mr. Minister?

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will certainly accept a pat on the back. I have to agree, there has been a real decline in the number of concerns that have come forward. The waiting room is a little more accommodating and things seem to be going a lot smoother and people are moving through the system a lot faster. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Minister. Next on my list, I have Mr. Jacobson.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just in regard to my colleague Mr. Abernethy saying how good services are getting here in Yellowknife for licensing, we do need the portable unit to be heading into the communities a little bit more often than it’s being sent in. We’re having people calling me again stating that the general I.D. that they could provide and the licensing for the upgrades and stuff. I would like to ask the Minister if that could be possible to start sending in staff into the communities again. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Minister McLeod.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, this is a program where we work with the communities to try to schedule visits. We certainly have room to enhance those visits. We try to allow the community to set the agenda or set the schedule. If there’s a need to go into Mr. Jacobson’s riding, we just need an invitation and we’ll have our staff in with a mobile unit.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Yes, an open invitation to Paulatuk. Getting back, the units for the road licensing equipment, I asked last year is it possible to get road licensing units for the hamlets to work with them to purchase these units so they have them in the community and then it’s no more hassle to get general identification and licensing upgrades. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I think for mobile equipment to go into Paulatuk, we would need more than just an MLA’s invitation. We probably would require the community to work with us to at least ensure that we have more than one or two people to deal with. As to having permanent units in the community, that is something that we had tried on a number of occasions to put out to contract. We need to have staff, of course, that are trained. If there is a recommendation or consideration, we would certainly be open to discussing how we can provide the service in the communities. We are finding in a lot of the smaller communities in the Northwest Territories it is difficult to have this service delivered under a contract basis as it is something that would have to be part of another business or service that is delivered. There is not enough to warrant having a business run solely on the revenues from this type of service.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Mr. Chairman, well, we can put it under the hamlet staff in the community at the local hamlet office. I think we don’t have a high turnover in those offices for staff secretary or SAOs. I would just like to make sure that the Minister does try to see if we could get this equipment into the community of Paulatuk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, we have in several communities done the very thing the Member is suggesting. Not all have continued to deliver, of course, but it is something we certainly can suggest to the community. I believe and expect that that has happened already, but we will make the gesture to the Municipality of Paulatuk. Of course, it would be up to them whether they wanted to agree to take it on or not. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Committee, we are on page 11-33, Transportation, activity summary, road licensing and safety, operations expenditure, $4.603 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, committee. Page 11-34, Transportation, information item, road licensing and safety, active positions. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you. Page 11-6, Transportation, information item, work performed on behalf of others. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you. Finally, committee, 11-37, Transportation, information item, work performed on behalf of others, continued.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, committee. I will ask you to return to page 11-7 for the summary. Department of Transportation. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thought we got rid of these last year, but apparently not. On this page we have $2.9 million-plus in other. It seems to be unidentified. I wonder if the Minister could explain if this is a mistake or if they intended to leave us in the dark about $3 million worth of expenses. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister McLeod.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I apologize. I was trying to get clarity on what the question was. Mr. Chairman, we are following the template that has been set out by Finance. In this budget line there are a number of expenses that are included in here. They include the PWS mail, SAM, contract registry chargebacks and Deh Cho Bridge interest expense.

**MS. BISARO:** Mr. Chairman, thanks for the explanation. I guess I need to attend the business plan discussions for Transportation and ask him that question on every page where there is other. Most other departments have managed to get rid of that. I did notice that there are small amounts in some cases, but there is a $2 million amount somewhere in one of the divisions. I would really appreciate if the department could look at breaking those things out next year. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, we hear the recommendation and we will see what the other departments are doing. As far as we are aware, we are following the template that is set out and if there is a way that we can get rid of the budget line listed as other, we will certainly do so.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Minister. Anything further, Ms. Bisaro? Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. I understand you have no further questions, so we will continue. Page 11-7, Transportation, department summary, operations expenditure summary, $110.777 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that concludes the Department of Transportation?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, committee. I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses and ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

Thank you, committee. Our next task is to review the budget for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, committee. I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to give opening remarks. Minister Bob McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Yes, I would, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to present the 2011-2012 main estimates for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

The department’s mandate is to promote economic self-sufficiency through responsible development of the Northwest Territories natural resources and the promotion of tourism, trade, investment, business and manufacturing to create a prosperous, diverse and sustainable economy for the benefit of all residents. Through this mandate, we continue to support the commitment of our government that all residents of the Northwest Territories must have the opportunity to build a stronger future for themselves, their families and their communities.

The department’s main estimates propose total operational expenses of approximately $53.3 million for the coming fiscal year, which is an increase of 3 percent over 2010-11. This includes sunsets of $3.5 million, an increase in strategic initiatives of $3.6 million and forced growth of $1.4 million.

In 2011-12 the department plans to support the Maximizing Opportunities Strategic Initiative by proposing investments in a number of programs and projects.

Industry, Tourism and Investment is proposing to establish an economic development officer in the community of Ulukhaktok at a cost of $150,000 annually. Having a dedicated economic development officer in Ulukhaktok will also assist Sachs Harbour and Paulatuk, by enabling the economic development officer for those communities to be able to focus time and energy on supporting economic development in those locations.

An investment of $150,000 is proposed to provide socio-economic expertise in the technical review of the proposed De Beers Gahcho Kue project, and in the negotiation of a socio-economic agreement.

Industry, Tourism and Investment is proposing to enhance funding for the Support to Entrepreneurs and Economic Development (SEED) Policy by an additional $350,000, bringing the investment to almost $4 million, with $125,000 of the existing funding being specifically targeted for support to the arts and fine crafts sector and $100,000 of the proposed increased funding being targeted specifically for support to the film industry.

The Community Harvesters Assistance Program provides funds, distributed by the local wildlife committees, to community harvesters in support of harvesting activities. Industry, Tourism and Investment delivers this program working with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and is proposing to invest an additional $475,000 annually in this program, for a total of $1.074 million.

In support of Reducing the Cost of Living Strategic Initiative, over the past several years Industry, Tourism and Investment has invested in increasing food production across the Northwest Territories through various initiatives.

Industry, Tourism and Investment proposes to invest an additional $100,000 in the promotion for the support for the Commercial Harvesting Program. This program supports the packaging, distribution and promotion of fish and meat products to consumers in the Northwest Territories, providing a stable supply of food for local needs and for sale at local markets.

The department is also proposing increased funding of $50,000 for agriculture development infrastructure. Investments in this program are designed to lengthen growing seasons, increase yields in Northwest Territories communities and help lower the cost of living.

Mr. Chairman, the department is also proposing some key areas of forced growth funding for the upcoming fiscal year.

The demand for the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program has continued to outstrip available resources for the past three years. In 2010, total income and support to Northwest Territories trappers was $1.3 million. It is proposed that an additional $65,000 per year be invested to support the trapping sector.

Over the last five years the number of applications for business advice, contributions and loan funding has tripled. Industry, Tourism and Investment is proposing $129,000 for an additional business development officer to help deliver business support programs in the North Slave region.

We are seeing increased park usage in all regions of the Northwest Territories, but particularly in the North Slave region. Industry, Tourism and Investment is proposing $85,000 to hire two additional seasonal parks officers, to ensure the safety of our park users and their enjoyment of our beautiful natural parks environments.

Since 2005, the resources allocated to deliver the Workers’ Safety and Compensation Commission for Harvesters Program have been exceeded by demand, in some cases by as much as $300,000 per year. This program provides benefits to harvesters of renewable resources who are injured while engaged in harvesting activities. We are proposing an additional $225,000 per year towards this program to accommodate the growing costs.

In addition to the activities outlined above, there are also some potential large-scale significant developments in the resource sector that could result in major investments in the Northwest Territories. During this past year we have seen the achievement of major milestones that have brought the Mackenzie Gas Project much closer to reality. Much work remains to be done to ensure we reach our goal in regards to this project.

The oil and gas and mining sectors are the bedrock of the Northwest Territories economy and we will continue to support geosciences research as one of the most important investments that a public government can make to sustain these industries. Our Territory has an abundance of untapped resources, ranking seventh out of 72 jurisdictions on the mineral potential index in the 2009-2010 Fraser Institute surveys, and we are just starting to realize the potential for mineral exploration in our Territory.

Many projects are in the works to explore this potential, projects like De Beers Gahcho Kue, which is currently undergoing environmental impact review. Other examples are the Avalon Rare Metals Nechalacho Project, believed to be one of the highest quality undeveloped rare earth element deposits in the world, and the Canadian Zinc Corporation Prairie Creek Project, with a proposed underground mine capable of processing up to 1,200 tonnes per day for 14 years. Developing mineral exploration projects and providing support for projects that span a wider scope such as lead, zinc, silver, gold, nickel and other rare earth elements has the potential to grow and diversify the Northwest Territories economy.

Reducing our reliance on imported diesel continues to be a key priority for our government. Industry, Tourism and Investment continues to support the Northwest Territories Energy Corporation in the implementation of the draft Northwest Territories Hydro Strategy. We have invested substantial time and effort in the electricity review, and the change we have brought to our electricity system could be one of the most significant achievements to date in addressing the high cost of living in the North, and especially in our remote communities.

In support of these energy initiatives, this government is investing in an Energy Investment Plan, and Industry, Tourism and Investment is proposing specific strategic initiatives for the 2011-12 fiscal year.

Industry, Tourism and Investment is proposing $2.350 million in funding for the proposed Lutselk’e mini-hydro facility to enter the regulatory phase and begin construction. These activities would be subject to accessing federal funding through the Green Infrastructure Fund.

We are also proposing a $50,000 investment towards renewal of the 2007 Northeast Territories Energy Plan.

Mr. Chairman, the initiatives I have touched on are just some examples of how Industry, Tourism and Investment is working on behalf of this Assembly and this government to fulfill its mission and have a diversified economy that provides all regions and communities with choices and opportunities as envisioned by the 16th Legislative Assembly.

I look forward to the committee’s comments and questions.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Minister McLeod, I’d like to ask you if you’d like to have witnesses in the House with you today.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Yes, I would, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Minister. I’d ask the Sergeant-at-Arms, if committee agrees...

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** ...to please escort the witnesses into the House. Mahsi.

I’d like to ask the Minister to please introduce his witnesses. Minister McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. On my left I have the deputy minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr Peter Vician, and on my right I have Nancy Magrum, director of financial services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Minister. Committee, we’ve agreed to go to general comments, I believe. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** So general comments. Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I’d like to thank the Minister for his opening comments today. I’m just going to go through and highlight just a couple of areas of interest to me.

One of the first areas I’d like to highlight is the investment of $150,000 into an economic development officer in the community of Ulukhaktok. I think this is a great step. I attended, in November, a meeting to work on a framework for the Anti-Poverty Strategy and in my opinion for any Anti-Poverty Strategy to be effective, Industry and Tourism and Investment and business need to be there. They need to be a partner. The reason I think that is because without economic development we can do all the social programs we want, but there won’t be any progress, there won’t be anything for these people to do. I think putting something, like, an EDO in a community like Ulukhaktok is going to solve the problem. I think having that person there who can work with local people to identify local opportunities that they can create their own businesses is brilliant and I know we don’t have one in every community and some communities might be too small to warrant them now, but over time it would be great to see more economic development officers in the communities working with the people on any opportunity that exists to bring money into a community and put money into pockets rather than just continuing to circulate the dollars that are there. I think an EDO in Ulukhaktok is a good step.

Also, you talked about increased money for SEED. I think that’s great. Once again, it would be great to see some of that money getting into the communities and more small business occurring in the communities. The more people we employ in the communities, the less we’ll be spending on social programs. So I’m happy to see that, but I’d like to see some additional focus on getting some of that stuff into the communities.

I’m very, very pleased to see additional money, more money going into things like arts and crafts. Now, I do have a question and you can answer it when you’re doing your summation, when you say arts and crafts I do want to know what you mean by art because art is very broad. Does that mean print or painting, or does it include things like performance art and stuff like that? There are many opportunities under that word “art” and under what is art for business opportunities and giving people meaningful employment even if they are running their own businesses.

I’m happy to see the $100,000 in support of the film industry. I know that I and my colleagues have been very vocal about the advantages that the film industry can bring to the Northwest Territories. I am going to be interested to see exactly what you’re spending that $100,000 on, whether it’s the study or whether we’re actually planning some implementation of some of the recommendations that we might see in May. I think it’s May when we’re going to see them. So that’s very good.

Different subject, and you didn’t really touch on this one, but this is something I and some of my colleagues attended a briefing a little while ago with NWT Tourism, the Minister himself and some representatives from the Hotel Association. My colleague Mr. Hawkins was talking about a hotel tax earlier today and I heard something slightly different when I was meeting with those people. I heard some representatives from the Hotel Association saying we would like legislation that would allow communities to choose to put in a hotel tax or not, and that those revenues, the 1 percent Mr. Hawkins was talking about, would then go back to the association to help them promote and support tourism in the Northwest Territories. I think that’s brilliant. I’m not sure that the GNWT should be putting a territory-wide tax, but I do support the idea of us putting in some legislation that would allow communities to choose to do that to support their hotel associations and I would like to see the Minister obviously champion in that to the Minister of Finance so that we can get that to happen. I think the legislation already exists in some jurisdictions. It should not be too hard for us to jump on that, get it to the Minister of Finance and implement it so those communities can make choices in the best interest of tourism in their communities and regions. So I’d really like to see the Minister making some progress in that area.

Very happy to see the investment in agriculture and fishing and community gardens, brilliant. Anything to help reduce the cost of living is a win-win. In October and previously I made statements and comments and I asked questions about red tape and I know my colleague Mr. Hawkins made some statements about red tape earlier in this session. Recognizing that the GNWT is not the only person responsible for red tape -- even though in the report it sounds like everything is the Government of the Northwest Territories by CFIB -- red tape is in the City, red tape is in the GNWT, red tape is in the federal government. I’m going to be asking some questions when we get to that area about what kind of paper requirement, what kind of reporting requirement do we require through SEED and for the small local businesses have we ever really dug into our program to see how much red tape our programs are creating for these small businesses. Is it reasonable? Is it too much? Are we making sure that people understand what the forms are, why they have to fill these things out and if there’s duplication have we considered getting rid of it? So red tape is an issue and when we get to that section I will be talking to it.

There are a lot of things happening in the Northwest Territories, and with the signing of the AIP and devolution in our foreseeable future there’s going to be more opportunities. So I’m really happy to hear you talk about things like Avalon, Canadian Zinc Corporation, Prairie Creek, diamond mines. I think we need to keep moving on those areas, responsible development. We need to be proponents of responsible development. So I’m happy to see some of those things there that could bring fresh new dollars into the Northwest Territories. Like I’ve said before, the dollars coming in are important and we need to bring outside dollars in and we need to find ways to circulate it as much as we can. The big industries will bring in the dollars, but we need as much strong, sustainable small businesses to keep those dollars circulating as much as possible. So it’s good to see some of those big things coming and hopefully we’ll see some more as we take some additional responsibility for our Territory, keeping in mind that it must be environmentally and socially responsible.

I will have many questions during detail, but thank you for your remarks and I look forward to your general thoughts on some of the things I’ve said and things I’m sure my colleagues are going to say as well. Thank you so much.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Committee, general comments, Industry, Tourism and Investment. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a few opening comments and I just wanted to echo some of the things my colleague Mr. Abernethy was saying about investment. I want to start off by saying I know the Minister is a real champion of the Northwest Territories and I know that he works very hard at promoting the Northwest Territories and getting out and hustling to get investment and dollars into our Territory and I’d like to thank him for the work that he does. I think as a Territory, and I know the Minister does what he does, but I think we should be doing much, much more self-promotion in getting out and letting people know what’s here, what opportunities are here and attracting investment.

There’s been a lot of work going toward the regulatory process. I know there’s still some work underway there. We need to start seeing those dollars coming back to the Northwest Territories in terms of exploration and development.

I know as well as championing the Territories, the Minister is a big fan of the Mackenzie Gas Project and I share his enthusiasm with that project and what it means to the future of the Northwest Territories. We need jobs, we need opportunities and these things aren’t just going to create themselves. We have to be out in front of it and trying to get dollars here and investment dollars here. The Northwest Territories is full of potential and I think the future is very bright and we need to be acting on the opportunities and possibilities that exist here for mining. I know Mr. Abernethy talked of some and I’m very excited about Prairie Creek, very excited about Gahcho Kue. There’s a real lot of excitement that’s out there and I think we need to harness that and keep moving in the right direction, and the Minister in his time as Minister of ITI has certainly done that.

We could always use more money for tourism and I’m a big fan of tourism, I always have been. Money spent on maintaining and upgrading our parks system and coupled with that is the road system. I know we just had the Minister of Transportation here, but we need to be working with both departments to ensure, and other Members have talked about the Deh Cho loop, the Deh Cho Trail, the improvements to the Liard Highway and the tourism opportunities that exist in the Deh Cho. They need to be thoroughly explored and the road is a big component of that, obviously.

I know the Minister and the department are committed to the parks system here in the Northwest Territories. It’s a fantastic parks system.

We also heard of Members talking about expanding the runway here in Yellowknife and that’s always been an issue that I think at some point in time I’d like to see addressed. We need to be looking at getting international flights directly from places like Japan and Germany into the Northwest Territories. Currently, they can fly directly into places like Alaska and Whitehorse, and we need to level that playing field. I think having an extended runway here in Yellowknife would certainly do that.

I think that’s about it. I’m encouraged with the extra money for SEED as well. I think there are some good things happening there. I know the Minister also did yeoman work in the Electricity Rate Review here in the Northwest Territories and I think he deserves a lot of credit for that as well. In so that it’s going to finally, I think, give people and businesses an opportunity on the ground in small communities to have a chance to succeed, because utility costs were killing people. If we take that big chunk of expenditures out of operating a business in the small community, that’s going to go a long way, I think. It’s early days yet but a couple years from now I think we’ll see more business start-up. I also think we’re going to have to look at finding some more money to get into business start-ups and providing opportunities for entrepreneurs that are out there to get into business at the community level so that we can grow an economy in our smaller communities. I think that the Electricity Rate Review and decreasing the price of power in the small communities, I think that’s going to be a great thing down the road.

I think that’s it for my comments, Mr. Chairman. I may have some comments as we go through the detail, but I just, again, wanted to thank the Minister and his staff I know who worked very hard in trying to deliver the department’s mandate. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Next on my list is Mr. Jacobson.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would also like to thank the Minister for the grand opening of our carvers and print shop in Ulukhaktok. I think it’s going to be a big success for the community, the region and for the Territory in selling our quality prints and carvings.

Highlights, especially in the report from Nunakput include the $350,000 in additional funding to support entrepreneurs and economic development in the SEED program, which we really need. The $1 million in Tourism 2015 program, the initiatives are attracting people to the Nunakput region to see our beautiful country up in where I’m from. The Small Communities Employment Program will support short-term job creation projects and skilled development in communities with low incomes. Looking forward to that. The $100,000 in additional funding to support food processing for commercial harvesting such as fish and meat. It will be good to see with our muskox meat that once the harvest is done, that it helps out not only selling it to the restaurants or in the marketplace, it helps out people in the communities as well. The $475,000 for the Community Harvesters Assistance Program amount almost doubles this year’s funding. With the contribution of the local wildlife committee who provided assistance, it now reaches a total of $1 million. We’re really looking forward to the extra funding.

The sport hunting market, the outfitters that are hurting from the ban from the U.S. pulling out of letting polar bears get on the endangered species list. I thank the Minister for all the hard work he’s done with me in regard to trying to get the European market to come hunt in the Nunakput region. We’re working together now to get Jim Shockey -- he’s a big game outfitter -- to come and do infomercials in the market and hopefully by the end of April to visit all the Nunakput communities.

The biggest drivers of the cost of living in the Nunakput region, the budget shows that the $1 million for residual heat in four communities including Ulukhaktok, we really need that. We’re thankful. Continued implementation on the GNWT Energy Plan includes investments in the Arctic Energy Alliance, which they’re a big help. Energy Efficiency Initiative Incentive Program, EnerGuide houses, EnerGuide information and awareness. Other investments are also being made in the energy efficiency initiatives and alternative energy sources, which I think is going to be good to see in the smaller communities. The $150,000 to support community energy plans in the communities are needed for the hamlets and private business people to try to succeed in business in the smaller communities. Business Support Program, business marketing changes in the operations and improved energy efficiency. One of the biggest ones is the wind energy supply in Tuk and Ulukhaktok. We’re looking forward to that. Also, the budget energy management specialist under the GNWT Energy Plan, we’re looking forward to that as well.

I always like to say, you know, in Nunakput we have basically all the oil and gas in the NWT. We’re resource rich and cash poor. Hopefully, with the pipeline going through and all the hard work that the Premier and the Minister are working towards getting the pipeline put through and the offshore exploration that’s going to happen with that and the job creation. Last month I was in Tuk and they’re talking LNG plant for Tuk. That’s looking really good and positive. Making Tuk a deep sea port to cut sailing time and drop the cost of living in Tuk and across the Nunakput communities that we represent. I think, with everything that’s going on, we’re going the right way.

I would just like to thank, again, the Minister for all the hard work he’s done with me and my office to provide services to Nunakput. Thank you and I look forward to page by page. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Next on my list, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for this opportunity to contribute to general comments. I want to start off by saying I’m very happy to see the department coming in at a 3 percent including a forced growth raise this year and nothing higher as the previous department did. I think that’s responsible and I appreciate the effort that that takes. I also agree with most if not all of the initiatives that the Minister highlighted here. The $150,000 proposed for the De Beers project, I would ask the Minister to please not use the model he used to develop the socio-economic agreement for the Mackenzie Gas Project. It was obviously an unmitigated disaster for the people of the Northwest Territories, but to stick with the diamond mine model that’s been developed before. We don’t need another travesty like that.

On the SEED policy, we steadily increased that I would like to see some evaluation of that program. We initially were interested in lots of ways of breaking down and examining that. That proved very challenging for this department, so I’m going to be asking again that we get some evaluation of those investments on a sector basis. As onerous as that might be, I think it’s the responsible way to go and perhaps that’s easily done now.

I also was happy to see the increase for the film industry. I’m awaiting the results of the review that’s ongoing, I believe, and will inform whether that’s a sufficient investment or not. I’m also curious on how it will be invested, of course.

The general approach to increasing food production or general highlighting and identification of that item is one I know the Minister is aware that I’m really supportive of. I think our investments there are somewhat modest, particularly in the area of agricultural development. They have done studies there with experts that have demonstrated the amazing gains that could be achieved with a very modest investment and really superb economic contributions that would be sustainable, I think, simply to provide 25 percent of our produce and meat products in the agricultural industry in the southern part of the NWT. But I appreciate all the other work that’s been done in the communities and I think that’s where society is and that there’s good response happening to the department’s efforts there.

I just want to highlight a couple of other areas. Of course I know we are supporting geoscience research to the tune of millions of dollars per year. A huge subsidy to this industry. I’m not sure whether we’re getting returns back on that. I know the federal government should be playing that role and I know they do in fact spend millions in that source. I’m a bit unclear about what we get from any investment there. I think where I saw productive investments was in the prospectors programs, modest as it was. That’s a role for our government until after devolution, after which I think it would be appropriate to get into that area of investment.

Again we’ve heard how the substantial investment of time and effort -- and I notice the Minister left out money, over $250,000 -- in the electricity system review. Probably pointed to as one of the most significant achievements in addressing the high cost of living. Really, this exercise simply has hidden the cost by shifting them from the ratepayers to the taxpayers. While I’m of course happy for the business community, for all the rest of us this is a pretty hollow victory. If this is something we’re proud of, I think we’re setting the bar awfully darn low. I hope we’ll correct that and start going after real costs.

One of which I think is highlighted here and that is the decision to get after -- I can’t say go ahead yet, apparently -- the Lutselk’e mini-hydro facility. Apparently this is vulnerable, depending on access to the federal Green Infrastructure Fund. I guess I’d be interested in how vulnerable that is, where we are at with that. We’ve been working on this for a decade. I would have thought we’d have nailed that partnership down by now.

I am concerned with the considerable drop in revenues of this department. If there’s one department you would expect to see some increases, it would be this department.

I’d say good things are happening with tourism, which I’m very happy to see. I think if we can enhance that with real environmentally responsible and innovative approaches to tourism business we would see even more benefits. I think sort of the green tourism potential is high. Not only that, the more we can show that environmental responsibility, the more we’ll have other types of tourism. My colleague Mr. Krutko and I, when we visited the Nordic countries, we were amazed at the number of people visiting those countries simply to see their technologies and how they do things in such an effective manner environmentally and how much it stimulated their economies.

I haven’t heard much about the significant role this department should be playing in the Protected Areas Strategy and supporting our Aboriginal partners, and any role in the land use framework. Again I remain concerned about the ongoing overlap and confusing mandates between Environment and Natural Resources and ITI.

I think one of my colleagues, I believe it was the chairman, mentioned the airport extension as a possibility in Yellowknife during our review of Transportation. I think there’s obviously an important role for ITI here in contributing to the development of a business case or not. I’d be interested if perhaps that’s happening too.

Again, as far as the Mackenzie Gas Project, I don’t think we need to be salesmen for this project. I think we need to be critical managers of it. It’s been approved. Let’s now drop the rose-tinted glasses and make sure it’s managed in a way that actually benefits our people, something that hasn’t been done to date and is not even in the three objectives of this government in real terms. I will be asking questions and contributing to the ongoing efforts on that project that may happen someday, but seems to be a huge priority every year for the last I don’t know how many years. It’s just simply costing us.

I’ll leave it at that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I have nobody on my list. Is committee agreed that we’ve concluded general comments?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** I will now go to the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment to respond to the general comments.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Members for those general comments. With regard to some of the specific comments that Mr. Abernethy raised, we certainly agree that we need to promote investment in the smaller communities and I think that’s evidenced by putting on the EDO in Ulukhaktok. I think the air rates were killing us, so it was a lot better to have somebody right there to maximize the funding. I think it was when Senator Eggleton came and talked about the anti-poverty, and that certainly cemented to me that job creation was a very large factor in reducing poverty. Certainly the more investment we can do in creating employment, the better it is.

On the investment with SEED, that’s certainly one of our objectives with SEED, is to create more small business in small communities. We are working very hard at that. There are still some challenges we have to address in terms of applications and approval rates for issuing and approving loans in communities, but we’re working on pushing more of those authorities out to the communities.

Arts and crafts, we are talking about artisans, not performers. Right now ITI has the responsibility for artisans and ECE has the responsibility for performers but we work very closely together to maximize that.

The film industry we have spent money on consulting. I think we have the report now. We’ll be meeting with the film producers and expect to finalize and table the report in May. Our expectation is that the money that we’ve identified now will go over the years as we get more and more into that field.

Hotel tax, that was my understanding as well, was that we would find a way to have the communities decide and also invest the money as the money is collected within the communities. We’re continuing to work with the NWT Association of Communities and Finance. My understanding of the process is that we have to go through the roundtable process and work to get this through the mill or the sausage maker or whatever they call it.

Local harvesting, it’s very important. In the past we used to value the results of harvesting at about $50 million. If the harvesting wasn’t there and you had to buy all the food at the grocery stores that’s how much extra it would cost. Now with division, we’re probably looking at closer to $25 million or $30 million, but local harvesting is still very important and the more self-sufficient we can get, the better it is.

On red tape, we used to have a red tape directorate. I think it was in the 13th Assembly. They ran out of things to do, I don’t know if they ran out of red tape to cut or I think it was more through cost reductions that the directorate was closed and the responsibility for reducing red tape was passed out to the departments. So each department is responsible for that. As a government we believe that with devolution, overall red tape will be reduced significantly, and of course we’re promoting the implementation of BizPaL throughout the Northwest Territories. We’re working very closely with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

On the comments on Avalon Canadian Zinc, other Nico Fortune Minerals, those kinds of projects, I think that devolution we’ve said many times is a game changer and without devolution we would have to just watch the federal government deal with it. With devolution we can now go and talk to these proponents to see what it would take to advance the projects and we can have much more hands-on approach. I think that’s a better way to go.

With regard to Mr. Ramsay’s comments, promoting NWT investment, and I know it’s been a big priority and I’ve been very grateful for the Members that have travelled along and helped promote the Northwest Territories. I think it’s been very worthwhile and gone a long ways.

The regulatory process is still an issue and whenever we go to mining meetings that’s one of the big concerns. They always compare us to Nunavut and Yukon and our regulatory process. The issues they need are some fiscal incentives. They’re finding it very difficult to access capital for exploration. Those kinds of things.

The Mackenzie Pipeline, that’s, as we’ve gone up and down the valley talking to communities, quite a few communities say, well, when we say do you think we should be promoting the local economy instead of promoting the Mackenzie Pipeline, quite a few communities say to them the Mackenzie Pipeline is promoting local economy.

More money for tourism. I know we’d always like to have more money and we think that if we had more money we could probably develop more products and have more visitation, but we realize the fiscal realities that we have to work under.

NWT parks again is, thank God we have beautiful, spectacular opportunities and experiences that can be developed and we will continue to work on that.

On expanding or extending the runway, ITI did lead and commission a study and we held a number of stakeholder meetings and consultations. The conclusion was that the primary local business didn’t support extending our runway. They felt that the business plan wasn’t there. They weren’t prepared to subsidize or spend money on a runway where they didn’t see the return on investment. That’s about as far as it got. We’re prepared to revisit it as we go along and as the economy continues to improve.

The money for SEED, that program has been oversubscribed pretty well since we instituted it. The more money we put into it the more it goes into the smaller communities.

The Electricity Rate Review, we’re starting to see the results of that. People are starting to receive their bills. So in the thermal communities they are benefitting.

Dollars for business start-ups, this is an area that we’re continuing to promote and we think that becoming an entrepreneur is a very excellent way to go. I think there are opportunities we can promote.

MLA Jacobson, Ulukhaktok was quite an eye-opener to go and see the impact that the opening of the print shop and carving centre had on the community and all the thanks and how grateful the people were and I think it is really going to be good for the community.

I talked about SEED already, tourism, fish and meat. I think that with increased investment in local wildlife committees and community harvesters, people in our communities that have to go further to get caribou will now be able to use that funding for that. It’s been quite a while since we had put money into that program. The outfitting, I think Jim Shockey -- I saw one of his promotions on TV -- would be excellent.

On the energy side, the residual heat, Arctic Energy Alliance and EnerGuide, every time we meet with a federal Minister we tell them that one of the biggest mistakes was they got rid of their Housing Efficiency Program. I thought that was an excellent program. If they wanted to do something for Canadians, they should reinstitute that. Offshore Mackenzie Pipeline, we are participating in the offshore review of the Mackenzie Pipeline. We are still waiting for the Order-in-Council from the federal government as to whether they’re going to approve the pipeline or not.

LNG terminal, I am not sure. I know we looked at economics of doing it in Alaska. The economics up there weren’t that great, but they have a different kind of natural gas there that needs to be cleaned up and is a lot further from an ocean port. I would be interested in looking at what the economics would be for something like that in Tuk. I agree a deep sea port would be very good for that area.

MLA Bromley, 3 percent growth is pretty hard to live with, but it is a commitment that we made as a government. I think that we are trying to stick to that.

On the Gahcho Kue, we will be continuing with the diamond mine socio-economic model. On the SEED program, I think that SEED has been in place now for four years so we probably have enough information to be able to do an evaluation of some sort. I talked about the film industry, local food production and I remember we went out to visit one of the local homes that had really gotten into food production. We talked about developing a food policy. I think that is still something we want to do but we are running out of time, so maybe it will be something we put on a transition arrangement with the next government.

Geoscience, we have been fairly successful getting money out of CanNor, the federal government in trying to protect the Arctic. They have invested $100 million in geoscience. We will probably have a debate on it. In my view, for every dollar you spend on geoscience you get $5 spent on exploration and $150 spent on development. I think that is a pretty good return.

Prospectors, I think we want to do something with devolution. I think that the devolution AIP, I think that we can look at doing something next year.

Electricity review, it is something we will have to continue to debate that. I think that we will see in two years. I think that, in our mind, we put ourselves in a better position to deal with that two years from now, as the media have raised.

The Lutselk’e mini-hydro, we can discuss that. The federal government, we have been pushing them pretty hard and we are trying to get a response, a commitment from them.

The dollar revenues, I would have to check our revenues. I know that our parks revenues have been going up and I’d to look at what our other revenue sources are.

Tourism, that’s something that we would like to continue to invest in and grow. The Protected Areas Strategy, we are a participant. We are sponsoring the Five Fingers/Five Fish Lakes in Jean Marie River.

Land use framework, we are working with the different departments to develop a land use framework. We are leading it through the Managing This Land Committee. The mandates of ITI and ENR, that was set by the Assembly, so we work with that. I already talked about the airport and the Mackenzie Pipeline. Those are my responses to the general comments, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. We already concluded general comments. Does committee agree that we move on to detail? Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was over in Dettah meeting with our Aboriginal brothers. Hopefully some other Members could have been there and I am here and I would like to make general comments.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Does committee agree that we go back to general comments?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Committee has agreed. Go ahead, Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regards to the Department of ITI and I think that realizing that we seem to put a lot of energy and emphasis on the energy sector there. We have to start focusing on people’s needs, especially in our smaller communities. We have to start really investing a lot of resources into small business developing our local economies, especially where we have high pockets of unemployment, and more importantly, the potential of tourism and also in regards to the potential of the big game hunting in the Mackenzie Delta. One of the things they have been doing is looking at the potential of commercial harvesting the muskox in which there are is an abundance of muskox especially in the Richardson Mountains in which there is the potential of that activity taking place. I think that with the downturn in the commercial harvesting of caribou in regards to big game hunting, this could be an alternative. I think that we have to look at those types of opportunities.

We look at the potential that can generate in regards to tourism, eco-tourism, the big game hunting and also in regards to the road traffic travelling up and down the Dempster Highway from the Yukon in which we are seeing higher volumes of people coming through. Again, without programs and services for the travelling public, they are just going to drive by the community and they won’t stop because the people don’t provide a coffee shop or a gas station that is open 24-7 and they know that the services aren’t there, that they are not going to stop. I think we have to start investing more money especially in this department in the area of looking at the renewable resource sector and also the tourism potential that we have especially in regards to road traffic and also with the working again with small communities.

In the past we did have a fur shop in Aklavik and a canvas shop in Fort McPherson. Again, I think we do have that business model, but since they got rid of the general manager of the canvas shop in Fort McPherson, it seems like the business basically dried up. I would like to know what are we doing to enhance that business. I am looking at the possibility of expanding it to maybe include partial ownership, regardless if it is between the bands of the Mackenzie Delta or the communities of, say, Aklavik and Fort McPherson, even Tsiigehtchic and maybe expanding the program out to the other communities and using the canvas product as the means of marketing. I think we should start looking at thinking of expanding not only the product but expanding the potential that we have to market through the logo of Fort McPherson Canvas Shop, which is world-renowned, by using other products in regards to traditional products regardless if it is slippers or something that is sewn locally or even expanding the canvas products to other types of items. I think what got the canvas shop going in Fort McPherson was selling coveralls to Dome Petroleum. That opportunity is there in regards to the pipeline or in regards to any non-renewable resource. I think that without having a manager that really is on top of things, you’re basically missing out on those opportunities and also formulating partnerships with either the local community development corporations and whatnot. We have to be able to show that we are trying to stimulate the local economies and also get people to work, more importantly, it is trying to reinvest a lot of these resources that we spend tons of dollars in excess of millions dealing with the non-renewable sector but we spend very little when it comes to the renewable sector such as trapping, fishing, agriculture. I think that is where we have to start making these new investments and deal with that segment of our economy. I think that as a department we have to seriously look at those type of investments.

In regards to the issues that were in your report, I think that we have to also realize at some point we have to make a political decision in regards to delivery of programs and services and do they really fit within this department. Especially when we are dealing with hunting and trapping issues and using the SEED program, for instance. Talking to a lot of harvesters, they find it very hard to access the SEED program, but again the SEED program in my riding is mostly used to basically buy items or supplies for people that sew, which is basically capped at that $500,000, which that is all that is. The only benefit from that program in my communities, in talking to the economic development officers, that seems to be that type of applications they are processing and yet you look at how the dollars have been allocated and we have to be able to show that we are really generating the local economies but also straying out into other sectors of our local economy, regardless if it is in the retail industry, in tourism or even, like I say, a small business that wants to get started in regards to the area developing a business opportunity either in the area of providing cooks and people to clean the camps and whatnot down the road and I think that is an area we can look at.

The same thing in regards to all those opportunities that are there in regards to small business, because the small business is what is going to drive our local economies. Being with the boom/bust cycle we do live in, in regards to oil and gas, those cycles that again we are not sitting on the sidelines waiting for the pipeline which is a couple of years down the road before a decision is really going to be made. Again, it is one of those things, are we just going to wait or are we going to start looking at our economies and develop business plans for the different communities. Let the communities develop those plans and business cases and promote the communities. Promote what they have to offer, more importantly, promote their local economies and basically take advantage of the travelling public, but more importantly, the tourism traffic that flows through, especially my communities in my riding, and also the potential we have for tourism in regards to big game hunting, eco-tourism.

Again, I think it is important that we do have to sometimes, looking at the big picture, sometimes we lose sight of the little things that really mean something to people. Little things for most people in our communities are trying to find a job when you have 45 percent unemployment, knowing that the average income is $18,000 a year, and you basically are missing out on that opportunity in which we are spending a lot of money just travelling to oil and gas conferences and dealing with those industries. At the end of the day, those dollars probably could be better spent put into local economies to generate jobs for people and getting them off income support and being able to develop that economy.

Another area, in regards to the Mackenzie Pipeline, in regards to the regulatory systems and the information that has been compiled, I think there has been a lot of questions asked in regards to that report of how communities are going to be impacted by those developments, and I think, if anything, this department could do a lot to avoid and mitigate a lot of those impacts by ensuring people have the fundamental elements in their communities so that they can also provide and take advantage of the opportunity when it comes. So it is a question about being ready, but more importantly, having the skilled workforce and having the people in place when it does happen and they are ready to go.

The other issue, I know that in regards to your energy stuff, I have to applaud you in regards to the energy initiatives that we have put forward, especially lowering the power rates in our communities. I know that everybody might not be satisfied on this side of the House, but for me it’s probably the next best thing to winning a lottery for a lot of our community members. To see our power rates go down, I think, if anything, you should be applauded for that and also from the government. Sometimes you don’t hear a lot of good news stories, but this definitely is one of them that we in our communities definitely are seeing the results that we were hoping for. Again, I think it is another area where we can hopefully entice businesses to come back into our communities and be put on a clear playing field in regards to a competitive playing field, because now their power rates are also going down and they are a little more competitive than what they were paying before, where in some cases businesses in my community were paying something in excess of $30,000 a month in the winter months, such as the Co-ops and Northern Stores. Again it does have a direct impact on those communities.

On closing, I would just like to get the Minister to tell me how are we going to monitor the program. More importantly, ensure that the businesses that are receiving the commercial subsidy are basically bringing down the cost of goods and services in our communities, because I think from the general public, you go into the Co-op and the store, the prices are still kind of high, we are $29 for a jar of Cheez Whiz, I think we are just about there in some of our communities.

Again, I will leave it at that and hear what the Minister has to say. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko, and I will give the... Sorry. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to say to the Minister and staff that we look forward to the increased support that this department is going to receive for the trappers. That just says that we believe in trapping and the way of life and support the Aboriginal trappers’ way of life in general, in terms of the value that the trapping industry brings to the Northwest Territories. I know our furs in the North are one of the most sought after in the world in terms of the quality that we bring to the industry down south, and it speaks a great volume and we have increased the dollars to this lifestyle. It is a lifestyle and it is sometimes difficult turning it into a business; however, it has been done, it has been proven and I want to thank the department for supporting that type of lifestyle that we have in our small communities where unemployment is high and there are some young people that do want to become trappers and it is a very honest and honourable way of life, I say.

I also want to ask the Minister to continue to forcefully push the initiative for small foods, such as wildlife, into our communities where it could be available. Even available to our Legislative Assembly here and into our institutions that we operate up and down the Mackenzie Valley. Food, I think that is one of our most unused resources that we have is the good food that we have up here. So I support the department to continue to push its Cabinet colleagues to strongly invest into the northern foods, take advantage of what we have here. I want to say that to the Minister.

I do want to say also, my colleague that spoke about the depreciative efforts by the department regarding bringing our electricity rates down through the initiatives of the Ministerial Energy Committee and all the Assembly itself had something to do with it, so that is a very good news that the Member has said from Mackenzie Delta. Once in a while we get to toot our horn all together. I say this to our people in the North, that we are listening. Sometimes it doesn’t seem we’re listening quickly enough, they say, because a bunch of other things have to take form before we can actually make it a reality. So I’d like to thank the Minister for his persistence and patience for making this become something we can all benefit from in the North.

I want to ask the Minister to continue to work on these socio-economic agreements with the mining companies. I’d like to see how it’s going to benefit the Sahtu people in the long run in terms of employment. Again, I said unemployment is quite high in the Sahtu communities and we’d certainly like to see those benefits come further away from the radius of the Yellowknife area into the Sahtu region. I know there are some people that are working in the mines from my communities. However, it’s not enough and we haven’t really seen the impact of the mines in my region. Hopefully that will continue to be the focus of the Minister and his staff to look at that area.

I had some other things to say. I wanted to touch a little bit on the parks. There’s only one park that we have I think in the Sahtu. McKinley Park is a very small park in Norman Wells and when I look at the other regions I see a list of rolls and rolls of parks in the other regions and when it comes to the Sahtu I see only one. I’m not too sure what initiatives the department and the Sahtu Region can work together at to look at more than one park. I know we are working on the possibility of the CANOL Heritage Trail, Do et’q Park, however, that has to go through some other federal work and they were not yet ready to implement any serious types of real work from this department. So it’s in the federal government’s hands. I thought maybe we might do some prep work, or we could do some things that would look at Do et’q Canyon, the CANOL Heritage, especially when there’s activity going on there and INAC is the one that holds the lands and there are uses of that trail. Hopefully we can have some other discussions on it, on the use of ATVs and vehicles. It’s not in our jurisdiction, but we are getting that park and we want to get a park that’s not being damaged. So I think we need to sit down with INAC and put some restrictions on that trail. Again, the GNWT can certainly voice their concerns. This department has also voiced concerns in other areas of our land on parks. So we could certainly do that. The Minister of Environment was here the other day. I certainly hope that he heard some of my concerns on the water, but they certainly can hear some of the concerns on parks also. So I think it’s a matter of priorities.

The Minister has done some good work in tourism in promoting the Sahtu. I just got sort of a report card on what’s happening in my region and I’m very pleased that people are working on some initiatives. I believe this department needs to be congratulated in terms of promoting the arts and crafts and world stages such as the Olympics. I was down there and it was very impressive. They did a darn good job. I’ve got to watch what I say here, but they did a darn good job of promoting the North and the people and we have some pretty good talent that the department showed off to the world.

So I wanted to thank the Minister for promoting some of the initiatives that we have in the Sahtu. We’ve built some very impressive projects such as the moose skin boat last year in Tulita, which is something that hasn’t been built in 20 years, Mr. Chair. This was done because of the cooperation between the department and the community of Tulita to build a moose skin boat and people were happy. I was actually there and I put a couple ribs in that moose skin boat. So kudos to me for helping out, but I’m just a beginner learner in that process. I wanted to say that brought a lot of joy to a lot of people, a lot of memories in putting together that moose skin boat for our people. So it’s these types of small initiatives that go a long way in my people’s minds, yet we still need to work with the Minister.

I want to say thank you to the Minister and his staff for continuing to work with the Sahtu people and I look forward to other things that could help us out. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I believe that concludes comments. I’d like to ask the Minister if he’d like to give a brief response.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to comment on some of the general comments that have been made. MLA Krutko, a lot of the comments that he made are exactly what we’re trying to do as a department and as a government to promote small business, develop local economies, promote tourism at the local level, and the tools that we have we’re working very hard to do that with. As a department our main goal when we started the 16th Assembly was that we want to have development in every community, every one of our 33 communities in the Northwest Territories and I think we’re well on our way to getting there.

Big game hunting, I know there’s big game hunting in the Mackenzie Mountains all the way. I’d be prepared to look at that to see what the communities want to do and I’d have to see what would be involved in them getting involved. I think there are licences already and so on.

On the Dempster Highway, the constant challenge that we have, we have a tourism centre in Dawson to divert people to go up to the Dempster and I think we need to develop more tourism products so that when they do go up there they spend a lot more time in the communities.

The canvas shop, we have a new board of directors for the canvas shop and we’re trying to get that back on track.

On the mandates, well, the last Legislative Assembly decided to split up RWED and make two departments and those are the mandates that were given to us.

On the Mackenzie Pipeline, I agree. There’s been a lot of work going on. The Aboriginal Oil and Gas Skills Training Fund of $9 million, that’s going to run out fairly soon. It’s probably going to go the same way as the Mining Skills Program. So I think we need to put pressure on the federal government to keep that going and we need to make sure that we’re ready.

The energy initiatives, I know that when we went to some of the smaller communities that have been affected, everybody is very pleased and we have to make sure that those reductions are passed on. We are engaged with our Statistics Bureau to monitor all of the retailers that we met with before we reduced the rates, before we introduce commercial rates. They all said their preference was to have lower rates that would be transparent and that they were going to make sure that those lower rates were passed on resulting in lower costs. We’re going to be following up also with the larger retailers that we had met with before these were passed on.

On support for trappers, I agree that it’s been a long time since we increased it. The fur prices are increasing. I think the projection for this year is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 20 percent. We agree we have the best fur in the world and that’s why we’ve developed the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur brand and everybody recognizes, it’s world-renowned and that’s added value to our product.

Socio-economic agreements, we think it’s important to make sure we maximize the benefits.

On the parks, Nechalacho is going to be one of the biggest parks in the Sahtu and that’s pretty close.

On the use of ATVs, this is still an issue. We’ll have to continue to work together.

I can vouch that when the federal Environment Minister was here we did put forward the issues and concerns about water quality, quantity. We also talked about parks. We support parks but we also have some issues with parks boundaries and how you deal with areas of high mineral potential.

On promoting arts and crafts and Northern House, we’re finding that there’s an expectation of what next. A lot of the performing artists, visual artists, feel that we have to build on the momentum, so we’re getting a lot of suggestions such as maybe we should have a mobile exhibition or so on, but that’s something that we will be looking at.

That’s all the comments I had, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Does committee agree that that concludes general comments?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Does committee agree we go on to detail?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** The summary for Industry, Tourism and Investment is on page 12-7, the operations expenditure summary. We will defer that until after consideration of detail, and start on page 12-8. Industry, Tourism and Investment, information item, infrastructure investment summary. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, committee. Page 12-9, Industry, Tourism and Investment, information item, revenue summary.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, committee. Page 12-10, Industry, Tourism and Investment, information item, active position summary. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, committee. Page 12-11, Industry, Tourism and Investment, information item, active positions, Business Development Investment Corporation. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 12-13, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, $7.735 million. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In regard to the shared services with the federal government agencies that are out there, especially in the area of mines and minerals, and more importantly, resources, I think especially from areas that are looking at the area of oil and gas and minerals and how can we access some of those federal dollars, especially in light of the APG obligations that they have as partners, one of the obligations is that they can bring to the table any oil and gas that they may have under their First Nations lands. But again, to get to that you need to do the basic information gathering by geotechnical information and also potentially, at some point, have to do seismic work and possibly drilling. It’s a costly endeavour and I think that’s something that’s always been out either working with the Canadian Petroleum Association or working in regard to…

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** I believe that’s actually coming up shortly, minerals and petroleum resources. Would that be the most appropriate place? It sounded like it to me, but I’ll let you be the judge of the most appropriate place for your questions. That’s on page 12-19.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was looking on...(inaudible)...in regard to geomatics and geographical information system in regard to the government’s responsibility under the geographical aspect. I think that we seem to be looking at the federal government for a lot of this stuff, but again, I think the GNWT is now looking at it. Again, it’s what are we doing to stimulate those economies. We put a lot of money in developing the mineral industry but what are we doing to promote the oil and gas industry, especially in my region, the Mackenzie Delta and also in regard to the Sahtu, and how can we get the land distribution system and land evaluations done in regard to geographical types of information. That’s what I was talking about in regard to the shared services, in regard to that type of analysis. What do we have to do to get the GNWT interested in doing geomatic and geographical information on potential for oil and gas or even minerals in our different regions?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe that the page the Member is looking at, this is a shared service that we share with ENR. I think the majority, 75 percent of it is with regard to ENR. We also do some GIS work on behalf of the federal government and it’s basically a remote sensing program. Whether it is something that can be utilized for geophysical surveys and so on would be something that we would have to look into. I don’t know if the technology that we have that we operate would lend itself to doing that type of work, but if it doesn’t fit there we can probably look at in other federal programs now that we’re looking into entering into a transitional arrangement with the federal government on the programs that they deliver. Thank you.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Again, I mean, if we’re spending money as a government and we’re collecting data, I think that data should be the privy of the public. I think that if we’re doing anything that there has to be a way that those public funds are being utilized, but more importantly, that the public can actually see how we’re spending those dollars. I know that you go to different conferences and whatnot and that you see all these different presenters and presentations on geotechnical information in regard to mostly mining potential, but I think we also have to look at it in the confines of oil and gas. I would just like to know what happens to the information that we do compile, and more importantly, how much money do we spend on it.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** All of the information that we collect is in the public domain. It is not only the remote sensing or the geomatics or the work that we do on behalf of the federal government for NTGO, it’s all available. I guess the problem we have is that unless somebody asks for some specific information, we have so much information that we wouldn’t know how to accumulate it unless somebody was specific in what they were requesting. Thank you.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Again, I mean, we know this is just another department. It seems like we’re spending a lot of money on people going out and getting the information on contracting services. Maybe that’s the question I’ll ask under corporate management with regard to corporate services. How much of that $400,000 are we spending? Is that money we’re spending on geologists or people who specialize in different areas looking at geology from the perspective of mining or oil and gas? Could you give me a breakdown of that $400,000 and how much of that is outside sources by way of geologists and people who compile that type of information for us?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I’m not sure what number he’s talking about, but our share of the geomatics is $476,000. If he’s asking about the contracts, I’ll ask Ms. Magrum to respond to that detailed question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Krutko, I believe that was the $406,000 under contract services. Thank you. We’ll go to Ms. Magrum for that.

**MS. MAGRUM:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The $406,000 under contract services and corporate management relates to the corporate management function. There wouldn’t be any geological contracts under this section. It relates to the directorate in headquarters and the corporate management function throughout the regions for the Department of ITI.

**Chairman (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Ms. Magrum. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** If possible, since it’s broken down by region, could you give us the regional breakdown of the $406,000 so we can see how much is going into the different regions?

**MS. MAGRUM:** Directorate in headquarters has $185,000 in contract services; North Slave region has $11,000; South Slave region has $7,000; Inuvik region, $1,000; Sahtu, $30,000; Deh Cho, $120,000 and $92,000 of that is related to strategic initiative with the protected areas that was approved in the 2010-2011 main estimates. Policy legislation and communication has $22,000; shared services finance and administration has $17,000; and shared services informatics has $11,000.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Could you tell me what that $1,000 was spent for in the Mackenzie Delta?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Ms. Magrum, the $1,000 in the Inuvik region.

**MS. MAGRUM:** Mr. Chairman, no, I’m sorry, I cannot.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Ms. Magrum. Anything further, Mr. Krutko?

**MR. KRUTKO:** I was going to ask to swap out for the $120,000. You can keep that $1,000. Just getting back to the geographical information systems, again, the information depends on who the user is. At the end of the day, that information could be used to benefit businesses whether you’re a miner or a geologist. You want that information so you can look at the potential of prospecting and whatnot. That’s the type of stuff I was trying to get at. We’re collecting this information but who is the end user at the end of the day of that information that we’re collecting? Is that information released freely? Can you go in and ask for it without paying anything?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All that information is available in the public domain. We also put on open houses where if anybody wants to understand how it works, we’re very pleased for anybody who is interested to come in and show them how it works, show them all the information we collect. The geosciences information that comes through the NTGO arrangements we have with the federal government. It’s all there, it’s all available to the public.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Committee, we’re on page 12-13, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, $7.735 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 12-14, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, information item, corporate management, active positions. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know in the past they used to break these numbers down into P1s, P2s, P3s, disabled, female. Is there any possibility we could get that type of breakdown to get an idea of what the statistics are in relation to the Affirmative Action Policy and looking at people with disabilities and the number of female workers in this department and in the area of senior managers?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We can provide those statistics to the Member. We have it here.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Once again, committee, we’re on page 12-14, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, information item, corporate management, active positions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 12-17, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, minerals and petroleum resources, operations expenditure summary, $6.063 million. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the area of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline, I know we had a presentation the other day on a whole bunch of obligations and regulatory requirements that we have to fulfill but also with regard to the federal requirements. In that presentation, reference was made to the regulations that have to be established to move that project forward. Could you give me an idea of what type of obligations we’re fulfilling and what type of regulations are we talking about bringing into place?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The kinds of things we’re talking about are that northern regulators would conduct the review of applications for authorizations and complete any requirements for hearings or consultations once the proponents conduct additional route alignment studies and detailed engineering. Technical expertise on the regulatory mitigation approaches to addressing air quality, waste management, hazardous materials management, spills planning, and environmental planning issues associated with oil and gas and pipeline construction activities will be required to handle the workload associated with the Mackenzie Gas Project process. Over the past two years ENR has developed the necessary expertise in the existing pipeline environmental officer position and I believe we have to do additional work with regard to the conversion of community gasification. So we would have to develop that and respond within a year once the federal government approves the pipeline project.

**MR. KRUTKO:** In regard to the overall pipeline, I think we’re talking about a couple of thousand applications for land use that is going to be required for land use permits. Are we going to have to bring in any special type of regulations into the Legislature to meet some of our obligations with regard to the recommendations that came out of the National Energy Board report? I would like to know if we have budgeted for the type of work that has to take place going forward in regard to our obligations to develop regulations or establish regulations that we may not have on the books right now that we’re going to have to bring forward.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** As we outlined in our presentation or briefing the other day, the Government of the Northwest Territories is a signatory to the regulatory agreement and we’re participating in the coordination of the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline regulatory process. The Mackenzie Gas Pipeline is expected to require 6,911 permits or licences, most of which will be reviewed by the Government of the Northwest Territories. The regulators and boards have made a commitment to a maximum 11-month review process for permits. It hasn’t been contemplated that we would have to change any regulations or develop any new legislation to deal with the pipeline. That’s where it is at this point.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Just on that, since we’re looking at bringing in or changing regulations, under the land claim agreements with regard to the Gwich’in under Section 21 and Section 20 for the Sahtu with regard to the subsurface resources section, it does say that you have to consult if you’re bringing forward any regulations or changing policies or procedures or regulations. I would like to know if the Aboriginal groups will be involved and consulted in that work that has to be done.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We have been fulfilling all of the consultation requirements. As we go forward if there are additional consultation requirements, we will be conducting those as well.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Maybe the Minister and his staff could take a look at Section 21 of the Gwich’in agreement which talks about subsurface resources because it’s clearly spelled out and it says you shall, so that way it’s an obligation not like the devolution process we were going through.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** If it says you shall, then we will. Six years ago or even earlier when the regulatory process started, I know that directions were given out to everybody to be very clear and be mindful of the consultation requirements that everybody had to follow and to be mindful of what was in the land claims that have been negotiated to date. We will go back and double check to make sure that all of those consultation requirements have been followed.

**MR. KRUTKO:** With regard to the regulatory legislation that’s being pushed by the federal government is the whole area of surface rights legislation. I think that’s something that we, at some point, will be responsible for. Where are we with the surface rights legislation? Are we included in the drafting of the federal regulations? I know there’s a big push to amend the Mackenzie Valley Resources Management Act but there’s also a need to establish the surface rights legislation as it’s developed in the land claim agreements. I’d just like to know with regard to the regulatory reviews and processes that have taken place, are we involved in that and when are we intending to see that come forward?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** As the Member knows, the land claims agreements reference surface rights board and when discussions on access and benefits agreements were being discussed, everybody rushed to look at the land claims agreements to see what tools were there to deal with it. Obviously we don’t have a surface rights board, we don’t have surface rights legislation. The land claims only envision arbitration if there are differences of opinion. The federal government, if they were to develop surface rights legislation, it would probably take them a couple of years at least. My understanding is that the federal negotiator that was appointed, Mr. John Pollard, part of his mandate was to look at the surface rights board possibilities or potential as part of his report, just from my understanding. Other than that, we haven’t been involved with any of the surface rights development and if we were it would be ENR that would be involved because they are responsible for the regulatory process of the federal government and our dealings with the federal government and our government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Minister. Next on my list I have Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Mr. Chairman, some of this might sound similar to a conversation I had with DOT earlier today. Ongoing improvements to our North Slave transportation system are critical to supporting the mine sector and the Slave Geological Province and economic development projects across the Northwest Territories and western Nunavut. What is ITI doing with industry and DOT and Aboriginal groups to improve winter road access to Tlicho communities in the Slave Geological Province? I know it is ultimately a DOT responsibility, but given the economic opportunities of these road realignments with Aboriginal organizations, I am wondering what role, if any, ITI is providing or playing.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Minister.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, whenever we meet with the mining industry or specific proponents of individual mining projects, most of the projects require two things to become feasible. It is usually some sort of road or cheaper power. Every opportunity we have, we try to facilitate. With regards to the Tlicho, we haven’t met with NICO. They expressed their concern with regards to a road, any road. The department had set aside money for a road, some sort of an all-weather road or at least improving the existing winter road. They were waiting for some response from the Tlicho government. I think they are still waiting on that. We have committed we would facilitate a meeting or I would meet with the Minister of Transportation to discuss that road. We are still working on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Mr. Chairman, I am happy to hear that there is some work going on with DOT. I think you both play an important role in this particular area. I am glad to see that is going. We have a lot of Aboriginal organizations right now that are really seizing the opportunities through the Tlicho and the Akaitcho to provide essential services and other services to the diamond mining industry here in the Northwest Territories. I know that there is some interest in becoming more engaged and more active in road construction, which means there has to be an opportunity for them to build some capacity that they may not have at this point. I know Deton’Cho is talking about building some capacity so that they can become more involved in time in road construction in the North Slave as well as throughout the Northwest Territories. I understand they are getting equipment and they are doing all sorts of things. What role, if any, does ITI have in helping them build some capacity and get some opportunities? Is ITI working with them on helping them tailor their bids to suit the needs of DOT so that they fully understand? Is there any business counselling going on, any opportunity for them to build some capacity so that they can start getting these road contracts so that they will be a road builder in the future? That is including seasonal and all-season roads, Mr. Chairman.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, through the tools that we have which are primarily the Business Development Investment Corporation and the Department of ITI and we are still waiting to see whether the Opportunities Fund will be a tool that we can use. We work very closely with the development corporations to develop capacity. We don’t give them counselling on specific projects or specific bids, but where they come to us for capital or for loans and we counsel them on whether we think it is a viable or feasible investment. We continue to work with them on an ongoing basis. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Next I have Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wondered what work is being done in terms of the Pollard report, if the Minister knows if that is going to be returned to us and are we done with that or do we have an opportunity to contribute to his review of the environmental process still. Thanks.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, it has been a while since we met with Mr. Pollard. I believe it was early in the summer of 2010. Indirectly we understand that he is still working on his report and that as soon as he completes it, he will be communicating it to the Minister of Indian Affairs. I expect that at some point after that we may or may not see the report, depending on whether that is something the federal government feels they can utilize. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Mr. Chairman, did we comment to try and get clarification that we are not a provincial government? We are a consensus government, a territorial government, and all MLAs need to be able to contribute to decisions made on these projects. Was that clarified to Mr. Pollard? My understanding is that this was probably a one-off sort of process this time hopefully and that other projects will not necessarily follow the review panel process. We need to be clear. I am wondering if the Minister managed to get that input to Mr. Pollard.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I believe that we communicated that to him, but Mr. Pollard, being an outstanding former Member of this Assembly, I am sure he understood how the consensus government works. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Mr. Chairman, he has indeed. I managed to bend his ear a bit myself. I appreciate that he was well qualified to do this job. How many personnel do we have in the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Office? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, we have six members right now. I believe that is our plan to keep it at that for the next while because of the fact that the NEB report indicated that proponents are to give an update in 2013. Our expectation is we will probably keep it at that for a year or so. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Mr. Chairman, obviously by keeping it at that, we know we have had that number for some unknown amount of time but probably a considerable number of years. We are still a considerable amount of years away from the project. Are these people being loaned out in the department to other initiatives?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, we reduced the number of personnel from seven to six. We are continuing to have the division continue to focus on the Mackenzie pipeline. They are working on the permitting. They are also working on the communities and making sure the communities are aware of what is going on and also making sure that we are ready when the decision is made to go ahead and also we are doing work on the community gas conversions that we are planning to do once the pipeline is constructed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. BROMLEY:** What about the socio-economic agreement? When do we anticipate that to come into force and are there people amongst these six staff that are working on that? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We had previously identified $300,000 for the operation of the Socio-economic Advisory Board and we have deferred that until 2012-2013 -- I believe it will show up in one of the pages -- and that is mainly due to scheduling changes and there is no position associated with that at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. BROMLEY:** My understanding is that our socio-economic agreement stipulates that the pipeline proponents will contribute a spectacular $75,000 a year for the socio-economic office. In fact, I understand that there won’t be an office. Is that still the case?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Not at this time.

**MR. BROMLEY:** It just seems that given the agreement that we have apparently signed, it is essentially the agreement from the proponents, I would suggest that the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Office has a lot of work they could be doing towards an improved socio-economic agreement before the project goes ahead. Is there the expertise within that office to look at that should we decide that is a reasonable direction for their work? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We have signed an agreement with the proponents which still stands. There are some appendices that have to still be negotiated, mainly in the area of transportation and health. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Again, my concern is, you know, we have looked at this agreement in committee and it’s full of holes. It doesn’t hold water. Is there nothing, I suppose we are just committed to this now, we have signed it, there is nothing else we can do to improve that in the five to eight years in the meantime.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** The agreement was signed in the 15th Assembly and that agreement is binding for the life of the project. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Mr. Chairman, that’s all. Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I wanted to clarify before I left with Mr. Bromley, he had asked me a question in his general comments about revenues. I didn’t have a chance; I forgot to address it in the response. I just wanted to indicate that the main reason for the reduction in the revenues was that we reduced the interest rates that were charged by the Business Development Institute of Canada while the economy was in a downturn for two years, so that is why the revenues dropped in that area. I just wanted to add that in. Thank you for your indulgence.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Bromley, did that answer your question?

**MR. BROMLEY:** It did indeed, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate the Minister filling in that gap. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Okay, next I have Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to ask the Minister, in regards to the Government of the Northwest Territories socio-economic agreements with industry and the monitoring of these industry activities, and I want to ask, with the socio-economic agreements with the mines, I have been approached by one employee that was working at the mines and he wanted me to check and see when there are layoffs and people are asked to leave work for whatever reasons from the mines, a statement that was made by this individual was that they lay off the Aboriginal people first before they start laying off other people and he thought that was discriminatory and that it wasn’t fair and he asked me how closely is the Government of the Northwest Territories monitoring or taking the socio-economic agreements to task by meeting with the mining companies. He thought that should be looked at, so I want to ask the Minister what is the mine doing to mitigate some of these concerns that I have heard.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will respond in a general way and then I will have Mr. Vician. I think the best way to look at it is, when we had a downturn in the economy and two of the three diamond mines shut down for extended periods, the people that were laid off were mainly southern workers that didn’t live in the Northwest Territories. So the mines went to special effort to keep Aboriginal and northern employees on and they did that until the economy recovered and I think things may have changed when the mines moved from open pit to underground mining where the skill sets required a change. That could have impacted.

I would like to reassure the Member that there is human rights legislation that was passed by this Assembly to protect against any possibilities of discrimination and I would like to ask, through you, Mr. Chairman, for Mr. Vician then to explain how we monitor the reporting through the socio-economic agreements. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Deputy Minister Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The socio-economic agreements with the mines reflect commitments that the mines have made to the Northwest Territories and one element of each socio-economic agreement with the mines reflects the people issues and there are three primary elements to those people issues. Hiring provisions, maintaining an employment level, particularly with Northwest Territories residents and Aboriginal persons of Northwest Territories residency and, finally, the training element. As the Minister has indicated, reporting mechanisms are built within the socio-economic agreements that require the mines to report regularly, annually and sometimes more often, with regard to performance in each of those areas. Each of those reports are made public and reviewed by the government and followed up with in terms of reviews with the mines and Government of the Northwest Territories. The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the Department of Health and Social Services all participate in those people issues and the discussions with the mines to ensure that they perform as we had hoped them to. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If it is possible, if I could ask the Minister if he has reports as to indicate the miners or the workers that were released were the southern workers that the Minister indicated when they had the economic downturn and that certainly when mining companies changed their operations to an underground mine, then maybe that is a factor that showed that they need more skilled workers there that contribute to hiring more southern workers to operate their mines at a different level of operations.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister if ITI.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We can go back and provide information. Also if the Member has specific individuals that have been affected, we could pass information on and we could follow up with the mining companies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I appreciate the Minister’s offer and I would take him up on his offer. I want to ask the Minister also on the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Office, we certainly want to continue to support the operation and look at where they can help support communities along the valley that look forward to training. It takes awhile to be an apprentice, pipefitter or any type of trade that would be required for the pipeline. That’s part of what we’re looking for in the support to get our communities up and trained to prepare for a pipeline, if there’s going to be a pipeline. I want to ask the Minister if that’s something we continue to do with the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Office.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Chair, the pipeline office does go to the communities. For those people in the communities that are interested in trades, they are prepared to direct them to the right people. We work very closely with Education, Culture and Employment. Not only has the pipeline increased their commitment for apprentices, they’ve increased it significantly.

As far as the approved funds, if our budget is approved, there will be $148,000 to continue to support efforts in relation to any B regulatory review; $300,000 contribution to APG; $360,000 for Aboriginal capacity building, contribution funding for Aboriginal organizations; and $55,000 for community consultation efforts. So we will be going to the communities and if there is interest, we can point them to the right direction. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Minister. With that, we’ll take a short break and resume shortly.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I’d like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. Prior to the break we were on page 12-17, Industry, Tourism and Investment, minerals and petroleum products, operations expenditure summary, $6.063 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Moving on to page 12-18, activity summary, minerals and petroleum resources, grants and contributions, contributions, $895,000. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Chair, the Mackenzie Valley development contributions, I want just a little more information on the Aboriginal capacity building initiatives. I understand from the previous page there is about $360,000. That’s what I wanted to ask this Minister, if he had some details he could pass out to the Members here to see the plans. We have six months left in this government to work closely with our communities that are going to be at ground zero at the pipeline, when the pipeline comes down. I’d like to see what programs are going to be supportive in capacity building. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of ITI.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That money is used to help Aboriginal governments build capacity, get ready for the pipeline. So we provide contribution funding to the Inuvialuit, the Gwich’in, the Sahtu and some communities in the Deh Cho. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Certainly communities and the regions are appreciative. Can I get a breakdown of the amounts for the groups that he listed off?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** My recollection is that it was $100,000 for the Gwich’in, $100,000 for the Inuvialuit, $100,000 for the Sahtu and $60,000 for the Dehcho and they draw down as the communities need it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I’ll have to do a little bit more research and digging around in this to how they’ve been drawn down and what type of capacity building initiatives the Sahtu has been using towards helping them with this project. That’s it, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Page 12-18, petroleum resources, grants and contributions, contributions, $895,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Agreed. Moving on to page 12-19, information item, active positions. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 12-21, again, activity summary, energy, operations expenditure summary. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have really three or four little sets of questions here. The first is on the Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee and I’m pretty sure this was a new committee to this Assembly. I just wondered if they’ve produced any reports yet, or if the intent is to produce any reports.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of ITI.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is new to the 16th Legislative Assembly and I’ll have to go back and check our terms of reference as to whether we had identified that we would be fulfilling an annual report or not. I know that we haven’t been to date. It’s been more of a coordinating committee approach that would deal with specific projects and we would report on specific projects. Some of the main things that we’ve been working on that we will be reporting on is we will be developing and releasing an energy report that will be released in 2011. We worked on an electricity review. We’ll also be developing a draft Hydro Strategy that will be released in 2011 and also the EPI, an update of our energy priorities inventory. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I appreciate the Minister’s remarks there. I want to ask is there also a focus internally in the government use of energy? Is that part of the mandate of this committee and maybe some progress in that area if it is? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you. Yes, that is given a focus on a departmental level. It is part of our energy priorities framework and that is something that is ongoing and we have invested on things to reduce energy for the GNWT like a wood pellet boiler for the Legislative Assembly, a wood pellet boiler in Fort Simpson, the Capital Asset Retrofit Fund under an energy efficiency for public housing. So those are some of the areas that we’ve been focusing on through the committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. BROMLEY:** The other area I wanted to ask about is the Taltson Hydro Project. Obviously we’ve chatted about that quite a bit over the years here. Is this dead in the water? I know that there was a bit of a response, a rejection of the environmental assessment I believe by the federal Minister and there is a challenge to get, well, let’s call it a hiccup, figured out and that’s the routing. I’d like to see this project go ahead, but with this routing figured out in a way that resolves the issues. Could I just get an update on that? I see we’re not spending any money on it this year, so I’m assuming maybe the partners are. Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We did have the environmental assessment report sent back by the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs and we are doing an assessment of that. My understanding is that the Premier will be briefing SCEDI, I believe, or SCOPP within the next couple days or in March, I think it’s March 2nd there will be a briefing on the Taltson. So I think at that time you’ll get the full details of what is being proposed. The corporation is working on that and the Premier will be updating committee on that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. BROMLEY: T**hanks for the Minister’s remarks. I’ll look forward to that briefing. I’m sure the Minister is aware and I’m sure he’s been part of briefings where we talked about the contracts with the mines. There’s high interest there, but obviously they can’t make the commitments until they have a definite proposal before them. Yet, as time goes by, the feasibility of it perhaps is compromised. Is there anything the Minister can share with us in terms of whether or not the mines are beginning to back off from interest in this proposal?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I can say that Deze Corporation sent letters to all of the diamond mines and my understanding is that they have received responses and they are reviewing the responses from the mines and they are factoring that into their response on how they’re going to deal with the environmental assessment of the proposed transmission line in the Taltson Hydro Expansion. So the Premier will also be reporting on that, as well, to committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks again to the Minister. I will await the Premier’s briefing. On the Hydro Strategy, I note we’re anticipating about one and a quarter million expenditures there. What’s planned for those expenditures? How do we plan to expend those dollars in the Hydro Strategy? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We’ve been spending that money to get more detail and information in order to finalize the Hydro Strategy and I’d like to ask Mr. Vician to go into more detail. He’s been working directly with NTEC on this, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Deputy Minister Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. A number of projects would merge and continue to emerge through NTEC where the funding is provided from ITI to support the projects of particular interest as work continuing on the Sahtu hydro assessment and the work associated with providing hydroelectricity to Sahtu communities, the most interesting projects regarding the Bear River potential and some hydrokinetic potential that we’re working with the community of Deline on. The next project that continues to be assessed is the Lac La Martre project and as we continue to work with the Tlicho Government with regard to a facility development, possibly as much as 13 megawatts, but again, subject to the Tlicho’s plans on a proposed hydro facility in the Lac La Martre area. Of course some of this money assists with the Taltson Project overall through the NTEC participation in the project with Deze. The other and overarching matter that NTEC is dealing with is the overall assessment of the potential for hydroelectricity development throughout the Northwest Territories and all regions, and so this is all part and parcel of the draft Hydro Strategy that exists and would be finalized and presented as part of the overall plan for hydro development in the Northwest Territories. Specifically, it provides them with the funding for the expertise in conducting all of these works. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I appreciate that information from the deputy minister. The $1.25 million probably wouldn’t cover all that. I think there’s another four-point-something million to cover most of those items including at least some of the Bear River stuff and the Whati project and in-stream hydro and Lutselk'e. I guess I’m trying to figure out how the dollars, $1.25. million, is being spent on the Hydro Strategy specifically versus on the work to develop hydro, so if there’s any clarification there, I’d appreciate it. Also, there was some mention of dollars going towards Deze, I think it was, for the Taltson project, and I’d like to know what that amount is. Thank you.

**MR. VICIAN:** I’m presuming that the reference is in regard to the contributions on 12-22 and the $1.25 million that goes to NTEC is there to provide supporting capacity for the Northwest Territories Energy Corporation and the experts in the corporation and the costs associated with the projects they’re directly working with and the contracts that they enter into to provide them with technical knowledge on the various projects. The other contributions that are identified are those contributions that are going directly to the communities and supporting the communities and their work on those specific projects identified.

In terms of the overall Taltson project, there are no funds specifically identified under this budget proposed for Taltson at this time. There has been in previous years, but all funding now emerges through other vehicles. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Next I have Mr. Yakeleya and Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. A couple questions on the hydro initiatives. I’m very happy to hear Mr. Deputy Minister indicate the Sahtu hydro. Deline has been waiting for a hydro initiative for about 17 years. The Minister had taken a delegation to Montreal to look at a possibility there and I was hoping that they would start looking at plans, if that’s something that could be used on the Bear River for the community of Deline. That would be something that the people in Deline would be looking forward to.

I want to ask the Minister on a forward going basis, this initiative seems to be viable, it’s feasible and that it’s something that the community could actually say that we’re going to start construction on the hydro initiative soon so that would be operating their own hydro facility like Lutselk'e or Whati. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Minister of ITI.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this stage most of the money that would be spent would be for planning and it would increase as we go forward. There are still some aspects of the project that would have to be worked out. The delegation that included MLA Bromley, I felt that the potential was there, the technology was there that could be used in the Northwest Territories. I guess a part of that that still has to be worked out is the Deline delegation was interested in taking over or becoming the builders and also having the rights to the technology in the Northwest Territories. That is kind of a different spin that we have to look at to see whether that’s possible, because that would mean working with the company that does have the patent rights right now to see whether they’re interested in going down that road. But, certainly, the technology is there that could be utilized for Deline. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Well, Mr. Chair, it does seem that we’re moving forward to hopefully actual construction on the Bear River to have a hydro plant on the Bear River for the community of Deline.

On the other issue of the Taltson Hydro, I know that the Taltson has done a lot of work. There are things that still need to be discussed. I still think that it’s a viable project and that we could continue to have that project maybe not moving right now, probably just on life support for a year or two before we can see if there’s some movement on the mines or there are other initiatives out there that certainly could benefit from the Taltson Hydro expansion. I just wanted to pass that on to the Minister. It’s going to be the decision on his colleagues and with our support to continue on with the Taltson. I just wanted to make that comment on that point there.

I want to get back to the hydro in the Sahtu that, again, we look forward to seeing some further steps to the construction of the Deline hydro initiative, and appreciate the Minister for providing support on the...(inaudible)...Lake hydro feasibility on the hydro and other areas that the people in the Sahtu felt that could benefit them. More comments to the Minister. Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you for those comments. I think hydro is a very exciting area. As I indicated, the Premier will be briefing committee in the near future. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next on my list is Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I’ve got a couple of questions here. First of all, the Minister has spoken about, and I think, certainly, Members are aware, and I think the general public also is aware, that we conducted an electricity review. We made some changes and we have reduced our power rates considerably. I know that it is recently put into place but I’d like to know from the Minister, since this is a new program and it’s some fairly major changes, some of which are still to be put into place, but what are the plans for the department to evaluate this particular system and the set up that we have at this moment? What are we doing to evaluate it, not right away but, say, in a year’s time or in 18 months’ time? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well, first of all, these changes are regulated by the Public Utilities Board so they’ll be monitoring the impacts of the changes. They are working under guidelines that had been set by this government that we communicated to the Public Utilities Board, and we will be making changes to the legislation. As well, as we had indicated with regard to ongoing monitoring of the reduced prices, the reduced commercial rates, that those rate savings are passed on to the customers in the form of lower prices. So we will be working with the Stats Bureau to monitor the cost of goods in the communities and also we will be interacting with the retailers to make sure that we have a transparent process so that we can see that those savings are passed on. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister. I wasn’t actually asking about monitoring, although I am very glad to hear that we will be doing some monitoring, I was asking about an evaluation of the new system. To me, those are different things. Monitoring is seeing how things are performing and gathering facts, which is what I heard the Minister say. Evaluation, to me, is looking at the system, looking at the facts, and determining whether or not this is what we want to continue to do. We have a two-year period right now in terms of the money that the GNWT is putting into the system. In the two-year time period we need to know whether or not this system is working so that we can make the proper decision as to whether or not further changes are required, whether we make changes for the better or whether we go back to the old system, heaven forbid.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I guess there are a number of different ways we could evaluate it. We could use the Program Review Office to look at how efficient or effective these changes were. We will monitor on an ongoing basis in conjunction with the Public Utilities Board and I think the main test will be that these rates are out there and that the lower costs are passed on to the consumers. We will be monitoring as a department and as a government.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister. This is just a comment but I didn’t hear the Minister say that an evaluation is planned for and I would encourage strongly the department to in 18 months, perhaps even two years, do an evaluation of this new program to determine whether or not it’s actually working. To me, as I said before, monitoring is not evaluating.

I have another question with regard to the project at Fort Simpson, the in-river hydro system. I may have missed it, I’m sorry if I have, but I know that there was some difficulty with that turbine and I just wondered where that project is at. Is it dead in the water, so to speak, or has it been put back on line?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** With regard to evaluation, if what’s seen to be required would be for us to hire a consultant and to do an evaluation I’m sure we could do that.

With regard to the hydrokinetic project in Fort Simpson, the project started this summer. It was designed to produce 14 to 15 kilowatt hours per day and it was only producing at four or five. There was some problem getting it to work at maximum efficiency. The deflectors that were in place weren’t designed to deal with deadheads, I guess they call it; those trees that are submerged and float just below the surface. It came and it moved the hydrokinetic turbine. We spent some time getting it fixed and running. My understanding is it will be put back on next year. Whether it will be done in Fort Simpson or some other community remains to be seen.

**MS. BISARO:** That’s great. Thank you to the Minister and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Next on my list is Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too have questions regarding the grants and contributions around the Hydro Strategy. I was to understand that they were looking at regional strategies for each of the different regions to look at the hydro potential in each of those regions. I’d like to know where we are with that work and is it part of the overall strategy going forward. Is that part and parcel of the $1.2 million that’s being spent? How are we going to pull those type of regional... Do we have a territorial strategy that’s looking at it from the confines of regional potential for hydro?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are working on finalizing a hydro strategy and we are working with NTEC to develop regional strategies. Funding has been identified for expansion of residual heat projects.

**MR. KRUTKO:** I noticed in the document they talk about a draft Hydro Strategy. When are we going to be publishing this strategy and identifying the information that’s been compiled so far today or is it going to be over a couple of years?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** The draft Hydro Strategy was released approximately two years ago and we expect to have a finalized Hydro Strategy in 2011.

**MR. KRUTKO:** The reason I ask is because I haven’t seen information in my region regarding the hydro potential that it has. I know there’s been baseline work done on that. We always talk about the Ross Dam and the potential of the hydro site on the Mackenzie River in the Gwich’in Settlement Area which has been talked about. Again you’re talking a dam that big and you’re talking about what they have in northern Quebec or Manitoba. There’s that potential but it’s a question of how much baseline data has been pulled together. I’d like to know where the data and information is for my riding.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We’ll commit to getting information from NTEC that we can provide to the Member with regard to information on potential hydro in his riding.

**MR. KRUTKO:** I couldn’t help hearing that they’re having problems with the Fort Simpson in-stream hydro project. I’m just wondering, if that doesn’t work there is there a possibility of moving it somewhere that there are calmer waters or smaller trees? Is there a chance of moving it up the valley where we might not have that big a problem?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We are committed to making hydrokinetic work, so we will work with NTEC to place it in a location where it has the best chance to succeed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Krutko? No? Alright. Next on my list is Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do appreciate the department working in this area. This is front-line work and we’re bound to have some kerfuffles along the way like big sunken trees running into our equipment. I appreciate the persistence to work with this new technology. I wanted to follow up in that respect just with the Bear River in-stream hydro. As the Minister mentioned, I was privileged to join him on a trip briefly with a bunch of people from Deline to look at a piece of technology that looks very positive. I just want to confirm that the Minister’s assessment is that does look fairly positive and ask whether he has any idea what costs might be for that technology yet, recognizing that it is very new.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are working with the company that has developed the technology and they have indicated that they still need some time to finalize the cost, and in order to do that they need a proposal from us so that they have all the parameters. RSW have done a lot of preliminary work. They’ve looked at the hydro potential of the majority of the rivers in the Northwest Territories so they have a very good idea of where the best potential for in-stream hydro to work. So we are looking at Deline and other possible locations in the Northwest Territories.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks to the Minister for those remarks. I think that’s pretty exciting technology that we’re talking about. On the Lutselk’e mini-hydro project I want to find out what the process is for determining whether or not we get the green infrastructure dollars that makes that project a go and how much do we need. That can be a time-consuming application process. Have we started that process towards achieving those resources?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Earlier this summer, or I should say the summer of 2010, we had the opportunity to meet with Minister Baird who was the Minister of Transportation at the time and the lead Minister on infrastructure. We met with him to follow up on a letter we had written to him requesting funding for under the Green Infrastructure Funding. We had requested funding for the Fort Providence transmission line and also for Lutselk’e in the amount of $6 million. He committed that he would take the proposal and review it very seriously, and we followed up a few times but we still haven’t received a definitive answer from the federal government as of yet.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I don’t think it’s news that many of us on committee have been suggesting that the Canada Building Project and stimulation dollars should have been going to projects like this that save us on our high operational costs of energy. I think that was a major missed opportunity. I think, I guess I basically hope that the department will be aggressive in getting after this and nailing this down. As I say, the building season’s here very soon and we don’t seem to know yet whether we have those dollars. I’m not very hopeful yet again for this project.

I’d like to ask the Minister how many employees we have in NTEC, the NWT Energy Corporation, and the Hydro Corporation and what are their areas of specialty, those that are technical.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I don’t have a specific number but they do have technical engineers and specialists and policy people that work in this area and we rely on them for most of the detailed technical work with regard to hydro.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I wonder if the Minister could provide us with that information at a later date. I just note the apparently high contracting dollars, $1.25 million for the Hydro Strategy and so on, that are being contracted out. It seems like we do have the expertise. I have had occasion to meet some of these people and they seem very qualified and whatnot. I haven’t met them all and I think it would be great to know that.

I’d like to talk about the Electricity Rate Review briefly here. I’m wondering if and when the Minister will come clean, so to speak, about how much GNWT is paying extra for this buy-down in electricity rates. Just briefly, the sorts of things that I’m aware of are the $3 million a year to buy down the rate riders. Businesses which were previously paying millions in power rates are considerably lower now. I’m happy to see that but I’m wondering what that amount is per year. We’re forgoing a Power Corporation dividend of $3.5 million. We’re probably over $10 million per year already for the next two years. Of course we’ve raised the thresholds beyond which residents and municipalities, I believe, pay the true cost of power, so there are probably some extra costs here. There’s a quarter million dollars in the cost of review. Certainly there are other costs that have accrued to GNWT behind the scenes that I haven’t detailed here. I’m wondering if the Minister plans to give us a straightforward accounting of the dollars that are now accruing to taxpayers rather than ratepayers in order to buy down this reduced power rate in our thermal communities. I think it’s important that we know, because if we are not transparent about these things, Mr. Chairman, we don’t know where to put our money to actually reduce the cost of power. I am talking about real reductions in the cost of power. Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I will be pleased to provide the Member with information on the number of employees with NTEC and with regards to an accounting of, or a reconciliation of, the numbers. We are quite open about it. We have provided this information on a regular basis to committee, and committee is well aware of what we did and it is no big secret. They dividend as they review, the team recommended that was part of what was causing the high cost of electricity. That will remain with NTEC for this year and potentially for further years.

With regards to the buy-down of the rate riders, we used money that had been identified for commercial subsidies of $3 million a year and our expectation is that there will be savings in the Territorial Power Subsidy Program, which was forecasted to go as high as $14 million and it will be substantially less, so our expectation is that within two years we will have a lot more flexibility. There will be savings that could be... If the future government decides to apply it to energy costs in the future, that is their prerogative. As well, the energy costs of the government remain the same. Part of the direction was that government rates would remain the same and it is not unusual, other jurisdictions do that routinely. Look at the Yukon, they have frozen all the rates, different rates at different levels, including government rates that pay a higher rate than local consumers. So we are quite prepared to provide all of that information again to committee and to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you Minister McLeod. Time is up and we are on page 12-21, Industry, Tourism and Investment. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to say that I appreciate Minister providing that. It will be great to see it in one package all put together. We did get it in various formats from time to time. I heard the Minister say that we used the $3 million as a commercial power subsidy and although that was contemplated at one time, I don’t believe that was done. I think we simply came up with different rates for commercial power rates and used those $3 million to buy down the rate riders for everybody. I just want to make sure we got accurate information on that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not sure what he means by conflated, but there was $3 million for two years in the EPI and we used that to pay down the rate riders and this resulted in the commercial rates decreasing in the thermal communities. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I guess there is still some more exploration to be done. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. No question, more of a comment. Minister McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We committed to provide information so perhaps it will become clearer when the information is provided. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. We are on page 12-21, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, energy, operations expenditure summary, $6.019 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Okay we are going to move along to page 12-22 and Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:**  Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is basically dealing with energy contributions. Especially in my riding, there is a lot of talk about biomass but in order to make biomass work, you have to have some sort of a residual system. Fort McPherson already has a residual heat system which is in partnership with the Power Corporation and the Gwich’in Development Corporation, but in order for the project in Fort McPherson to work they are going to have to expand the existing system in order to bring on biomass. I think that is a good opportunity to join these two initiatives together in which we are looking at other buildings in the community, but more importantly, expanding a system which is already in place. The biggest cost to biomass is going to be for the transmission system, the piping system that has to be encased. The case of the system in Fort McPherson, I think that there has cost about $2 million and it is already in place.

I’d just like to ask what two community groups are working either with the Power Corporation and community organizations and other government departments, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and your department, the Power Corporation can do to assist communities in expanding in the area of residual heat. I think that we have a lot of power plants which are next door to either fire halls or different garages, either it is the NWT Housing Corporation garage or whatnot. I think it is the perfect opportunity to expand that technology in the Northwest Territories when we are talking about reducing the costs, but more importantly, it is a good business opportunity for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation to look at the possibility of bringing in additional revenues using distribution of not only electricity but distribution of heat. I would just like to know if that is something that has been looked at and exactly how do the communities access those dollars.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All government departments work very closely together. We don’t work in stovepipes anymore, so working with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources we will be working very closely with the communities, as the deputy minister of Environment and Natural Resources mentioned yesterday, that he would be meeting with the Gwich’in chiefs. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has the lead for biomass and we also are dealing with residual heat, so between the two departments I am sure we can work out an arrangement with the Gwich’in as to what should be done in Fort McPherson with their existing residual heat project. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. KRUTKO:**  Again, you are talking two departments but the key for this to work, you need the third player, which is the NWT Power Corporation because they own the power plants. Basically for them this is a perfect opportunity to use a lot of the heat that is basically simply blowing out the smokestacks of the power plants and take advantage of that heat that is being burnt off by diesel generation. I think that we have to look at that technology, and more importantly, expand it to other communities where we have facilities, like I say, just in a couple of feet, a couple of yards from the power plant, especially like garages. In the case of Tsiigehtchic, they are looking at the fire hall which is right next to the power plant. I think that is the type of stuff I am looking at. Again, in order for this to work, you have to work in conjunction, like I say, with three different parties, which has to include the Power Corporation. They are one of the key players because they own the facilities that the heat is going to come off of. Again, I would just like to throw that out there and maybe I will leave that question with you and maybe you can respond to it. I will have another question after that. Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We do work closely with the Power Corporation. We have the MECC committee, also we have deputy minister level committees, so I think we have that covered. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. KRUTKO:**  Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a question in regards to the $4.2 million in regards to the energy contribution. There are a couple of projects on there that seem like they are basically going to lapse in regards to the Fort Providence transmission line, and other projects I believe are going to lapse. What happens to the dollars that are allocated here? Can they be moved to the other envelope proposals in regards to higher in-stream hydro you can use those additional dollars to deal with, like I say, expansion of residual heat systems. What is the flexibility in the dollars that are allocated in the 4.2 since it doesn’t look like we’re going to spend all of the 4.2? There are a couple of items there that aren’t going to be implemented anytime soon.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I guess I’ll give you a breakdown of the $4.250 million. Lutselk’e mini-hydro there’s $2.8 million; Whati hydro transmission line, $250,000; Sahtu hydro assessment, $200,000; and expansion of residual heat. The other projects are dependent on funding being made available, but generally the process that we follow is we track our expenditures and we report on a regular basis on our budget for energy priority investments to the coordinating committee and if there are any adjustments to the energy priority investments, it’s approved at that level. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Again, I didn’t catch the one in regard to the amount of money that’s been spent on the expansion of residual heat. Could you explain that or elaborate on that funding allocation? I didn’t catch that one.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We’re proposing $1 million for 2011-12.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** I’m good.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I have nobody else on my list for 12-22, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, energy, grants and contributions, contributions, $5.500 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Next is 12-23, Industry, Tourism and Investment, information item, energy, active positions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 12-25, tourism and parks. Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a couple of quick questions on this section. When Education, Culture and Employment was in front of us I asked some questions about some of the things you’re doing. One of the things you’re doing is supporting arts and culture, obviously through things like the NWT Arts Society and whatnot, and I’m about to say something I know the Minister has heard from me before, but when it comes to tourism supporting the arts is a great advantage. I mean, people are looking for reasons to come to the North, people are looking for activities and, yes, we have aurora and, yes, we have some of the most beautiful land on the planet and, yes, we have a lot of cultural activities going on, but we can’t exclude art and those types of things. Musicians, festivals, arts conferences, arts fairs.

In my opening comments I was happy to see that there is some increase in your SEED program for artists, but not performers and I think in the tourism area by supporting our artists and finding ways to partner with them and have them act as our champions is a good thing. It’s good for the artists, it’s good for the Northwest Territories because it will draw attention and those musicians and painters and authors and whatnot could be brilliant ambassadors for us. We’ve got Make Your Mark right now, which I think is a fairly decent program, but if we had some of our local talent out there making their mark as well and supporting them, I think we’d be getting a real bang for our buck in that area.

So with the new Tourism Strategy that just came out, what are we doing to work with Education, Culture and Employment who has invested a lot of money in our artists to find partnership opportunities to work with them, including Education, Culture and the artists and have these people work as ambassadors or out there pushing their art, but pushing the Northwest Territories as well?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Tourism.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We work very closely with Education, Culture and Employment to promote all artists, whether it’s visual artists or performing artists and I think we’ve been very successful in doing so. Some of the promotions that we’ve done, we’ve continued to support artists, but also I’ve had many accolades from performing artist who have accessed funding through the SEED program so that they can go out to different festivals. Some of them even go to storytelling festivals in Hawaii and so on.

In addition to that, we also maintain an NWT artists database. We have an NWT Arts Branding Logo Program. We do NWT community consultations. We do arts promotions, art displays. We have an NWT Film Commission. We have a new strategic initiative, Support for NWT Arts Programs and Services, and we have some financial support to the SEED program. We have an NWT artists’ news line/newsletter. We have a toll-free line and we are developing a plan that will identify marketing tactics and strategies to focus on marketing and promotion of NWT artists from across the Northwest Territories in all genres of the arts to maximize potential and exposure of northern talent nationally and internationally. ITI and ECE have contracted Points North and Kellett Communications to prepare a plan for consideration by the departments. We expect a final report by the end of February of this year. Then we will have recommendations made to both the Ministers. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thanks to the Minister for that. Everything you just said is great and fantastic. I’m really excited by the last point you made about this last project you’re putting together to find ways to market. I think that’s brilliant and I’m really looking forward to seeing that. That’s the type of thing I’ve been talking about since I got here, is these people have a valuable product and partnering with them I think will prove dividends. So I’m very excited about that.

Just in closing, I spend a lot of time looking at the products that we’re putting out there by way of Spectacular and stuff like that, and it’s great product. I’m very happy with Spectacular, but I’d like to open the Tourism NWT with our Spectacular logos on it and I’d like to see some of the pictures and links to where some of these artists are, pictures of the artists. Let’s highlight them, let’s work with them. Also, links to their websites, links to where we can see their products, links to where these individuals live so that people who are coming up here can find them and get in and see some of their product and hopefully spend some of their money here. I love it when people from outside of Yellowknife spend their money here. I think it’s brilliant and anything we can do to encourage people to come and spend some money, even if it’s flowing money into the pockets of the artists, that money will be circulated here, it’s brilliant.

So that last point, I’m very happy to hear that and I’m really looking forward to seeing that product and I hope you share it with us as quickly as you guys share it with yourselves. Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We work very closely with NWT Tourism, which is our marketing arm, and we’ll make sure that they have all these links, if they don’t already have them, and we’ll commit to sharing the results of this report as soon as we get it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Next I have Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a question with regard to parks and parks revenue. I noticed on the revenue page that our revenue was down considerably and I believe I heard the Minister say that it had to do with, or I think the explanation is that it has to do with interest. I didn’t see any indication in the revenue page of revenue from parks. Is there revenue and, if so, how much is there? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Tourism.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Most of our revenue from parks we work out arrangements through the parks operator and it’s sort of like on a commission basis and I think that’s why it doesn’t show up on the revenue sheet. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MS. BISARO:** Okay, I wondered if that was why, but the Minister said most of the revenue. So if there is some revenue from parks, do we just sweep it under the mat, or is it recorded elsewhere? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** The operation of parks is by contract and I guess what I meant was they don’t collect enough revenues to pay for all of the contract. So they collect revenues and then they get a top-up from the department is generally how we work with our contractors. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks for that explanation. I did note, I think it was in the Minister’s opening remarks, he said that bookings at parks are up. Could I get an estimation of by what percentage and does it... Even though our bookings are up, we still are not obviously, from the sounds of things, covering the costs of contractors. Can I get that confirmed, please? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Our bookings are up by 5 percent and the revenues still don’t cover the cost of the contractors, because at one time we were looking at privatizing all of the parks but we weren’t able to do it. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Next I have Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Chair, I wanted to speak to a little bit of my experience on the CANOL Trail. I just love being out there on the CANOL Trail and hoping that we would have a future Do et’q Territorial Park. This area is very special to the people in the Sahtu and I recommend that some of my colleagues here have some time to take a hike on the trail there and see the beauty there. It would be good for all of us to be out on the land there. However, Mr. Chair, there’s a serious threat to the proposed territorial park and that’s the ATVs, the all-terrain vehicles, as I spoke to earlier, that’s destroying some of the pristine beauty of the future territorial park, especially the tires from these vehicles are grinding up the muskeg, they’re exposing permafrost and the trail now is turning into mud. It damages the plants and the lichens in those areas.

Mr. Chair, I want to ask the Minister, under the Territorial Parks Act, they offer protection in our parks in allowing motor vehicles except in designated areas. I wanted to ask, because the CANOL is not yet a territorial park -- it’s been proposed -- if there’s any type of interim protection that he can work with his colleagues to see if there could be some restrictions of ATVs in this area here. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Tourism.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have tried a number of different things. We communicated with the federal government, who are the land managers. They have responded in writing indicating they are not prepared to take any action to stop ATV drivers. We have committed to preparing signs to advise the four-wheelers of the importance and sensitive nature of the park. We’re also trying to educate the four-wheelers that come up there. I think we’ve been in contact with the group that was there previously and I think they were planning to come up, but then they realized the sensitive nature and I understood that they had communicated they weren’t coming back.

I think that with regard to the cleanup, a lot of work still has to be done. We’ve been working with affected communities so that they can get contracts to do the cleanup work, so I guess we’re going forward as best as we can and until such time as the land is cleaned up and turned over, I think it will be difficult to enforce the people that go out there on that area. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** The park is a long way from actually coming under the territorial jurisdiction. I think there’s a 10-step process before we can actually see something. I think we’re on step three on having jurisdiction over the park. I appreciate having the signs up there; however, some people can’t read signs and so they just drive right past the signs and they continue to tear up the area with their ATVs. It’s a real shame that something like this continues and I’m asking if this department can look at some interim protection to restrict the use of the ATVs. The road is good. If they can stay sensibly on the road, but it’s when they go off the road into the mountains and trails that causes a lot of damage. That’s what I was asking. I know it’s difficult. I was hoping that the Minister can be a little more persuasive or forceful to the powers that be and even looking at our own park and see what we can do to put some interim protection in the meantime, because we’re not doing any good at all. Our government, the federal government, they’re not doing anything to restrict the ATVs from being in that area. Where’s the government, the Conservative government, the government in power right now to help us? It doesn’t leave me much faith in our government to protect our land, especially when an ATV is used in this area here.

This is the home of my grandparents, my grandmother. I was hoping that we could have some interim protection with the transportation or something that would stop the ATV users from coming into this area here. Common sense if they stay on the road, it’s okay, but they’re not using common sense. They’re going off the trail and you can see it just like scratch marks on a...(inaudible)... It’s not good there, so I’m hoping that we can do something more than just putting some signs up. I mean, it’s good. We put pressure on the land rovers and I was very happy that they wrote back saying that they’re not going to come and we’ve seen the damage on the trail. We’ve seen the way they went through swamps and Beaver Lake areas. So I think that’s what we’re asking.

Like I said, in the Sahtu we only have one park. This one here is being proposed a world-class park and it’s just a real shame when we fly over the trail and when you get closer to the trail and where you can actually see the ATV tire tracks. It’s a crying shame that this is happening. Why can’t the ATV owners stay on the road or leave it and walk the trail? I don’t understand. That’s a little bit of my frustration, is as to seeing if we can put some interim protection there. This won’t make too many ATV owners happy because they certainly go up there to hunt and they use that area. I wonder what else we can do to protect our area and protect the Do et’q CANOL Trail proposed territorial park. I’m going to make a plea to the Minister again. Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** The land owners, Indian and Northern Affairs, have undertaken a scoping session or scoping work to determine the nature of the cleanup and how much it would cost to clean it up. They are moving towards cleaning up the area. The communications we’ve had with them they’ve said they’re prepared to turn over the land for the park tomorrow if we’re prepared to accept it as is and pay for the cleanup. Obviously that’s not in our best interest to do so. They’re not prepared to enforce it, we don’t have a petty trespass act to have the authority to keep anybody off federal lands, so other than to post signs and intervene with the four-wheeler clubs that operate, I think that’s about as far as we can go.

I know that at mile 222 ENR has a checkpoint during the hunting season. They could probably give out some information to the four-wheelers if they go through there, but we don’t have people there during the summer months when they usually go out. It’s a difficult situation. I’m not sure what the answer is but we can continue to bring it to the attention of Indian Affairs and the Sahtu landowners that own the first 10 kilometres of the road that’s up there.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just following up on Mr. Yakeleya’s discussions, I know in the Yukon there are corridors along the highway. There are certain times of the year you can’t even put a snowmobile on the tundra unless you have six inches of snow, to enforce that regulation. I find it interesting that we can’t do it here but they have regulations in the Yukon which are pretty forceful with regard to four-wheelers and snowmobiles, that you have to have a certain amount of snow before you can actually drive off a highway and whatnot. Maybe that’s something that can be looked at with regard to how they’re able to accomplish that in the Yukon. We can’t do it here and where the damage seems to be is just across the border on our side of the border versus the Yukon side. Maybe we could work in conjunction with our Yukon colleagues to see how exactly they’re able to do that over there.

I have to agree with the Minister that we definitely need a petty trespassing legislation of some sort so that we are able to make people accountable when they damage property and the land. Because we live in a sensitive environment, we have to ensure that we don’t allow people to just roam wherever, destroying the permafrost and whatnot and not be accountable for it. Maybe I’d suggest that we do look at what they’ve done in the Yukon, because I know the Dempster Highway corridor has been there for some time and they do have some pretty tough regulations on what you can and cannot do in that corridor. Maybe that’s something the Minister of Environment and his colleagues in the Yukon can maybe give us some suggestions on how they were able to do it there so we can look at doing something similar on the CANOL Trail.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe I know how they did it. They own highways and they also have devolution. That’s how they were able to do it. We’ll be prepared to talk with the Yukon because we interact with them all the time.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Anything further, Mr. Krutko? Page 12-25, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, tourism and parks, operations expenditure summary, $11.295 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 12-26, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, tourism and parks, grants and contributions, contributions. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the Sport Hunt Outfitter Marketing Support Program, we had an interesting meeting a while back with EDI. We met with a bunch of different outfitters and the department and it seemed like some people were for it and some people said they can’t access the program. I’m just wondering how many people did access the program and have it worked out the situation where people who were present said they were having challenges accessing the program because either their business model didn’t fit with regard to either converting to a different type of activity, like a fishing lodge versus a hunting lodge. Again, I’d like to know what type of uptake did we have and what have we done with the people who seemed to have some issues with this funding.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There’s two parts to this funding. It’s $300,000 for polar bear and $300,000 for caribou. They have to be resident of the Northwest Territories to be able to access the funding. Also, I guess you can’t be red-flagged by this government. So if you owe the government money, then we can’t discharge the funding. It has to meet some basic criteria to access the funding. The last time I checked there was maybe four out of seven caribou outfitters that accessed the funding for caribou.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Again, it was the caribou outfitters that seemed to have an issue. I haven’t heard anything regarding the polar bear outfitters. It seemed like it was the caribou outfitters that had some difficulties with some of this funding. It did come down to more of accessing the funding, application based, their application didn’t meet the criteria. I just wanted to throw that out there with regard to the issues that have come before ourselves as committee. That’s good with me.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Page 12-26, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, tourism and parks, grants and contributions, contributions, $4.036 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 12-27, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, information item, tourism and parks, active positions. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again I’d like to ask for a breakdown with regard to the affirmative action candidates, management positions, and disability and women in the different positions.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We’ll present the statistics on a departmental basis.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Krutko, is that good? Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Yes, I just note that, I don’t know why it’s not on here, but you do have an operation in Dawson City, Yukon, in this classification?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I believe there are two seasonal workers who work there.

**MR. KRUTKO:** I just wanted to know when the job is opening up in case I might have to apply for it.

---Laughter

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Could be a lot of competition. Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Generally they open mid-May to mid-September.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** My sympathies, Mr. Krutko. Anything further? Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Page 12-27, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, information item, tourism and parks, active positions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 12-29. Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Two questions. I think the Minister has already answered one. In his opening comments he talked about an increase in SEED of $350,000 and he mentioned that $150,000 of it, I think, was for arts and crafts. I asked a question about arts, wondering if that was available to performing arts. In your response to us you said, no, it’s for artisans not performers. But then later you said that we do have musicians and other performing artists accessing SEED. The program is available to performing artists who meet the criteria, they can still access SEED, it doesn’t actually exclude any of those possibilities. Is that correct?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** That’s correct, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Good to know, good to know. I’ll certainly direct people I know there that are looking for support. Second question is following up on questions I asked last October and I know Mr. Hawkins asked recently about red tape. I mentioned it in my opening comments and you responded. Now that we no longer have that office in the GNWT whose task was trying to help reduce red tape, I’m curious what this department is doing. I like your program; this isn’t a criticism of your program at all. I know people who are applying on things like SEED who have expressed some concerns about the quantity of paperwork. I know that you have advisors in there to help people through the paperwork, which is brilliant, but has any analysis been done as to what we’re asking people to fill out, what we’re asking people to do? Are we asking for more than we need? Is there an opportunity to simplify what we’re requesting in order to reduce the amount of paperwork that is required to make the process just a little bit easier to understand and a little bit easier to work your way through? Is there any opportunity for a reduction in red tape or paper?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We’re always looking to reduce red tape at every opportunity. We have gone a long ways with regard to licensing of tourism operators and so on. We’ve reduced some of the requirements. On the business side it’s not as easy as it sounds. We just have to look at some of the Auditor General reports and they put pretty onerous reporting requirements on ourselves so that a lot of the paperwork that we require is something that we believe we have to follow proper accounting procedures and certainly the Auditor General comments very quickly if we seem not to be complying. Also we have to be vigilant about legislation that government passes because there’s a lot of legislation that results in an infrared tape increase. Having said that, in working with our clients at the community level, if our economic development officers know the paperwork, we review our procedures so that we reduce red tape wherever possible and we try to push out more accountability and authority to the community level so that we can process it faster in the communities.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Obviously, thanks to the Minister for that. I think anything we can do to be more small business friendly, the better off we’re going to be. Especially in the small communities. Like I said in my opening comments, I really appreciate the addition of some EDOs in the communities like Ulukhaktok. I think those officers will be able to help people through the paperwork. At the same time, thank you for the stuff you’re doing trying to reduce red tape. I think there’s an opportunity for you as the Minister of ITI to go to the Executive and suggest that maybe it’s time we engaged the Program Review Office to review the amount of paperwork that we’re requiring businesses and other ventures to complete in the Northwest Territories. If we can reduce any of that, we’re ahead, and we’ve got this Program Review Office that’s supposed to be doing these type of things and I’m of the opinion that we want to be as supportive of small businesses as we can. A lot of these businesses have people who may not have a business degree or business diploma. Anything we can do to make their lives easier and increase their likelihood of success is good. If you could approach your colleagues on that side of the House and start talking about maybe a little bit of review through the program review to find some ways to reduce some of this paper that some people are concerned about, anything we can do would be good. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you Mr. Abernethy. Would you care to respond Minister McLeod?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are quite prepared to do that. Maybe we will get a higher mark next year with the CFIB. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next I have on my list Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question I have for the Minister is on the memorandum of understanding with the government and the Sahtu Secretariat. I want to ask the Minister if this memorandum of understanding document is distributed to agencies and boards also outside of the Sahtu region that had to deal with businesses in the Sahtu.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The memorandum of understanding applies to all government departments and although the list that we have for the Sahtu we feel is deficient because it doesn’t list all of the Sahtu businesses, that is the list that we have. We have been asking for three years to have the list updated but we haven’t had an updated list yet. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I asked the Minister if the memorandum of understanding is distributed to the agencies and boards; for example, the Stanton Health Board, other agencies. I know the departments, NCPC, NWT Housing Corporation, those are corporations and boards and agencies. The deficiencies, well, that is another issue here. I am asking about the distribution of this with the departments, agencies and boards.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We distribute it to all departments, which it does not include NTPC because there is no businesses that provide that service and it is not our intention to look at other forms of generating power, but the boards and agencies are covered under either health or education. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** The reason why I am asking is just for clarification and the Minister of Health is well aware of this issue and hoping to get a briefing tomorrow with her department that the company that is a Sahtu beneficiary has been operating with our health board in the Sahtu. Their contract, according to them, was taken from them and Stanton is taking over the contract and going to be tendering out that work in the Sahtu. It seems like Stanton is not respecting the memorandum of understanding in this process here, so I am hoping again to get an update from the Minister tomorrow on this issue here. It seems like they are not respecting the memorandum of understanding and this business is a legitimate, qualified Sahtu Secretariat beneficiary business, so that is where I am going with this question.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We do distribute the memorandum of understanding to all departments, and all departments, because it is government policy, follow the policy of the government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** It is one thing to distribute it to all the departments and it’s another thing if they are following the spirit and intent of the memorandum of understanding that was negotiated between the government and the Sahtu Secretariat. So I will wait and see if the government is going to follow the spirit and intent of the memorandum of understanding that was signed in the last government.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I think that would be the appropriate course of action. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Committee, we are on page 12-29, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, economic diversification and business support, operations expenditure summary, $22.214 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 12-30, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, economic diversification and business support, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, $625,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON, MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am so happy we got onto this page here, Mr. Chairman, because it talks about Community Harvesters Assistance Program and I understand the community of Deline was asking for some assistance as the impacts of the caribou and there was a request in to help with the community such as some support went to the Tlicho community on caribou hunts. I want to ask the Minister if the community of Deline have initiated any kind of contact with his office as we already had some discussions with the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources on this issue here to help with the community hunts under this budget here. It is a good budget and we are hoping that they would be supported by this department here. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I haven’t been approached by anybody from Deline to assist with funding for a caribou hunt and the increase in CHAP funding was done with the understanding that what we wanted to do was help reduce the high cost of food, ensure that the benefit was equitable and transparent to all communities in the Northwest Territories, reduce economic disparities between large and small communities and it should be consistent with land claim obligations where these exist. The CHAP program was developed to assist harvesters and communities throughout the Northwest Territories and so it is up to the communities to decide how they want to spend the money. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** What I will do is I will fire the e-mail off to the Minister’s office. The request, I believe it was addressed to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, and that is privy to this type of funding. Just for the community so I will let the Minister know that this is the wish of the community of Deline and let the appropriate officials deal with it then. Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I will look forward to the e-mail.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Minister. Ms. Bisaro. Committee, we are on page 12-30, Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a quick follow-up on the Community Harvesters Assistance Program. Although if you read the description, it is contributed to local wildlife committees which have been recognized about harvesting resources. Is this program specifically and only targeted to harvesting animals? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Generally the community harvesters or local wildlife committees dealing with hunters and trappers and, in some cases, fishermen. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Is the program open to agriculture products?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Not unless there’s a hunter and a trapper practicing agriculture as well. No, it’s not open to agriculture. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Although I’m confident, I sense a little bit of humour in the Minister’s answer. The way he said it, does he mean that it’s only prescribed to hunters and trappers or is it prescribed only for hunting and trapping? I’m just trying to get a clarification. If a hunter or trapper decides to, say, farm honey, as a matter of fact, would they qualify for the program? I just give that as an example.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I’m not trying to be humorous. The money goes to local wildlife committees and it’s there to help hunters and trappers and local wildlife committees decide what form the assistance would take. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. HAWKINS:** That’s good.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Committee, we’re on page 12-30, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, economic diversification and business support, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, $625,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 12-31. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a question here related to fisheries. I noted fisheries is mentioned on page 12-28 where it talks about programs to support fisheries and then it talks about commercial fisheries here in a contribution. In that fisheries is a federal responsibility and waters are a federal responsibility, can I get an explanation as to how we are involved in fisheries, why we are involved in fisheries if it really is the feds who ought to be looking after this? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of ITI.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess way back in the ‘60s or ‘70s, the Government of the Northwest Territories decided to become involved in Great Slave Lake Fishery and passed the Freshwater Fish Marketing Act. The federal government is responsible for fisheries, but we’re assisting fishermen with administration and transportation of their catch.

The other earlier reference to fishing was to develop local markets for fish in the Northwest Territories. That’s the difference. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MS. BISARO:** I certainly am totally in support of local fishers and fisheries. Local encouragement of businesses is something that I am very much in support of. I do have to wonder, though, about the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. Are there any other jurisdictions in Canada that have a province or a territory running a fish marketing arm? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We’re not running a fish marketing arm. We’re just assisting them with transportation and some core funding. The other jurisdictions have their own organizations. The Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation’s mandate is to buy the fish and also to assist in the harvesting. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MS. BISARO:** I have to confess, I don’t know a lot about the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, but I thought I understood some time ago that we were dealing with them in Winnipeg. If this is a territorial marketing corporation, are the employees northern or is it an organization that operates outside of the North? If that’s the case, why are we supporting it? Thank you.

**MR. BOB MCLEOD:** It’s not a marketing corporation. It’s the NWT Fishermen’s Federation. So it’s made up of fishermen that fish in Great Slave Lake and Kakisa and Tathlina Lake. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MS. BISARO:** Now I’m really confused because I thought we were talking about the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. That’s fine. I have no further questions.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. We ‘re on page 12-31. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Moving on to page 12-32. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to ask a couple of clarifications on agriculture development infrastructure and the promotion support for commercial processing and marketing fish and meat in the NWT. Are these brand new initiatives? I understood from the Minister’s remarks that we were adding $50,000 to agriculture, but I don’t see any previous expenditures that would indicate we were spending $250,000. I’m wondering where I could find that or if you could steer me straight here. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. With regard to the $300,000 for agriculture development infrastructure, $250,000 was transferred from contract services originally and $50,000 is the increase for 2011-12. On the promote and support for commercial harvest processing, $450,000 is transferred from contracting services and $100,000 is the increase for 2011-12. Thank you, Mr Chair.

**MR. BROMLEY:** And were those transfers done some years ago or was that just done this year? Can I get confirmation that these are first-time expenditures in recent times, say in this Assembly? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** These are new expenditures for commercial harvest processing and also agriculture development infrastructure, is my understanding. Maybe I’ll get Mr. Vician to describe it, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Deputy Minister Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The committee may recall that the proposal came forward last year with regard to investment in agriculture and meat and fish distribution marketing. The budget had originally been established as a contracting expense. So the initiative was managed through the other expense category of accounting and would show up on previous sheets in the past. It has been proposed through this budget that this shift to contributions and that’s why this matter now shows up on the contributions accounting, and it’s proposed that we then use the contribution agreement process to work with communities and those involved in the agriculture and fish and meat marketing areas to deal through those transactions. It’s the nature of accounting. Last year it was with other expenses on your previous activity sheet and now we’ve shifted to grants and contributions as an accounting mechanism. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate those remarks. So does this mean that these groups of entrepreneurs or whatever will have more say on how these dollars are spent than in the past? Would that be fair to say or is that not necessarily true? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Bob McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe as well and that’s why it was done. It will be application based. The money will be distributed through a contribution. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I guess my last question with this is: is there a change in process here for the people interested in applying for these dollars and if there is, will you take steps to make them well aware of that? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We feel it is an improvement and we will definitely be taking steps to make sure that everybody that we think would be interested would be aware of it.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Next I have Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I’m wondering if the Minister can give me some information on broadband infrastructure support. What does that actually mean in terms of is that equipment that we’re putting into the communities? Are we buying satellites, things of that nature, and is he able to give me some examples as to where we would see if it is infrastructure for that fact? Where we would see it? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Probably four years ago the federal government announced that they were investing approximately $39 million between Nunavut and the Northwest Territories to expand and improve on the broadband infrastructure. Nunavut got the majority of the money. I think they got $25 million and the Northwest Territories got $14 million. This is our contribution to assist with the O and M and administration with the Falcon Communications. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Next I have Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Instead of asking a question I would like to ask the Minister if I could get an explanation of how much money is used for fishing and for what purposes, what the programs are. I see marketing of fish here on this page and I asked some questions on the previous one and got totally lost. If I could simply get an outline of all the programs that pertain to fish, which ones are marketing, which ones are Fishermen’s’ Federation, et cetera. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Minister, can you provide that? Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. On the previous page the $225,000 was for the NWT Fishermen’s Federation, which is made up of a consortium of fishers that fish on Great Slave Lake. The $550,000 is we want to promote and develop local markets for not only fish but also country food. For example, fish in Great Slave Lake, we’d like to see it served in the hospitals, we’d like to see it served in corrections facilities and also made available for consumption by people, because we think fish is a very healthy food. So if we can distribute and sell it locally rather than shipping it to Winnipeg for sale, then we think it will help the fishermen. They will get a higher price and they’ll get a better return. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks for the explanation. I guess I have to ask if the Fishermen’s Federation gets $225,000, does the NWT Farmers’ Association get the same amount of money? I would appreciate an explanation other than verbally. Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** The NWT Farmers’ Association gets core funding, as well, and the Growing Forward Program that we have with the federal government, I think it’s budgeted for about $625,000. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** We’re on page 12-32, activity summary, economic diversification and business support, grants and contributions, grants and contributions, $12.949 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total grants and contributions, $13.574 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Moving on to page 12-33, again it’s an information item. Active positions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Okay. We’re moving on to lease commitments, page 12-34, again an information item.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Fur Marketing Service Revolving Fund. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I see we have lease commitments for infrastructure for the visitors centre in Inuvik as well as Dawson. I’m just wondering, does ITI provide any sort of contributions to the visitors centre in the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre that’s located here in Yellowknife that serves the whole North Slave. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of ITI.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Yes, we do, Mr. Chair.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Okay. I’ll take as a yes, we do on good faith.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Okay. We’re on page 12-35. Again it’s an information item, Fur Marketing Service Revolving Fund.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Okay. Moving on to page 12-36. Again an information item, work performed on behalf of others. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Chair, I want to ask on the Growing Forward Project, the department has been very successful in the Sahtu with the potatoes. I think we are the spud capital of the Northwest Territories now with a good initiative last year in Norman Wells. I want to ask the Minister if the communities also wanted to look at other agricultural initiatives, can we start raising chickens and other birds like that so they become the capital of the Sahtu in terms of having those types of industries in our region to cut down the high cost of having chickens bought in the store there, or turkeys? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of ITI.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know there’s an election coming up so maybe the Member wants to make sure everybody has a chicken in their pot or a turkey.

We do have programs to be accessed to provide for agricultural development. In the Member’s riding, in Deline there’s a group that have gotten together and they’re going to be raising chickens and turkeys and collecting eggs. So, definitely, it’s possible, and under the Growing Forward Project there are about eight or nine different categories that can be funded through that program. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** We certainly look forward to that. I know that in Deline they’re asking about it so hopefully if they really, really do well, everybody in this House will be buying Deline fresh eggs and having some turkeys for Thanksgiving dinner. I just wanted to say that to the Minister to look at other initiatives in our region.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Again, we’re on page 12-36, information item, work performed on behalf of others.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Moving on to page 12-37. Again, information item, work performed on behalf of others.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** With that, can we go back to the department summary on page 12-7. Department summary, operations expenditure summary, $53.326 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree that we’ve concluded the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** With that, I’d like to thank the Minister and thank the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you escort the witnesses out. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move we report progress.

---Defeated

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I believe the next item we agreed to move into was HR. If that’s agreeable, I’ll ask the Minister if he has any opening comments.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress.

---Defeated

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. McLeod, you have the floor for opening comments.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I’m pleased to present the Department of Human Resources 2011-2012 main estimates. The department’s mandate is to provide leadership and direction to departments and agencies in all areas of human resource management. In doing so Human Resources is guided by legislation, policies, and strategies; in particular, 20/20: A Brilliant North, the Northwest Territories Public Service Strategic Plan. As Members know, this comprehensive framework sets out a 10-year plan for the development of the public service in the Northwest Territories.

The focus for 2011-2012 will be on fixing the foundation through strategic business process redesign, learning and development for all employees, and human resource planning.

The department’s main estimates propose total operational expenditures of $42.421 million. This represents a budget increase of 5.8 percent or $2.348 million from 2010-2011. The increase in the main estimates includes:

* forced growth funding of $645,000 for compensation and benefits costs associated with the collective agreement;
* $491,000 to re-establish five payroll positions. The payroll office was reduced in 2007, however, efficiencies were not fully realized and the support service stabilization, the resource shortfall, must be addressed;
* $338,000 for planning as the collective agreements with the Union of Northern Workers, the Northwest Territories Teachers’ Association, and Northwest Territories physicians contracts all expire in 2012;
* $167,000 investment to improve the government’s capacity to deliver French language communication and services to the public under the Official Languages Act. One new bilingual human resources facilitator position will be hired to ensure that bilingual human resource requirements will be met and supported.

The Department of Human Resources looks forward to supporting the provision of French language services to the public in a manner that supports our relationship with the Northwest Territories Francophone Committee and the Federation Franco TeNOise.

The government, like other employees, is faced with significant challenges including an aging workforce, rising labour costs, and a competitive employment environment. Maintaining a sustainable, vibrant public service requires us to strategically invest in our workforce through 20/20, the Public Service Strategic Plan, in a manner that recognizes corporate pressures including the need to remain fiscally prudent.

The main estimates include a $1 million investment for continued implementation of 20/20 recruitment and retention strategies. Specifically these additional resources will be used to ensure effective workforce stability through human resource planning including succession planning and performance management. These resources will also be used to upgrade the Human Resource Information System in order to increase efficiencies and support user accessibility. In addition, this upgrade will ensure compatibility of the financial system for accountability and management with the Human Resources system.

The work that is taking place as part of 20/20 recognizes the long-term nature of this strategic plan. Building upon the productive pilot project undertaken by three departments to develop human resource plans, align with business plans, a second set of departments will engage in the process to develop their human resource plans by the end of 2011. A draft succession planning framework will be developed during 2011-2012 as outlined in the 20/20 three-year action plan.

The Department of Human Resources, working with departments and agencies, will continue to invest in the Associate Director/Superintendent Program. In 2010-2011, the first intake for this program, two Aboriginal individuals were the successful candidates and are in their new positions. We are in the process of confirming the third Aboriginal candidate. These new opportunities under this program are located in Inuvik with Education, Culture and Employment, Fort Smith with Municipal and Community Affairs, and in Fort Simpson with Deh Cho Health and Social Services Authority. The three associate director superintendent positions are included in the department’s position count.

Finally, to strengthen employee learning and development, resources will be designated to implement the research and planning work completed in 2010-2011. These include:

* The Competency-Based Performance Management Framework that’s under development and will be piloted in 2011-2012. Competencies form the basis for performance evaluation as well as learning and development programs.
* Aboriginal cultural awareness training will be rolled out in 2011-2012. Recognizing their expertise and knowledge, Aboriginal governments and other communities of interest have been consulted in the development of the curriculum outlined for Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training.
* We will continue to focus on increasing employment and participation of persons with disabilities within the government’s labour force. Expanding on the sensitivity awareness test training session held in 2011, sensitivity training will be available in 2011-2012 along with the disabilities framework and information campaign.
* The Government of the Northwest Territories Advisory Committee on Employability continues to provide expert input and advise on diversity and inclusivity within the Government of the Northwest Territories human resources strategies. Work is underway to attract persons with disabilities into the Government of the Northwest Territories workforce and ensure appropriate partnerships are in place to support employees with disabilities.

I look forward to providing Members with a full update on year two implementation of the Public Service Strategic Action Plan in May 2011.

The department continues to move forward with fixing the foundation through business process redesign work intended to stabilize the core transactional human resource services that the department provides. This will be Human Resources’ main focus in 2011-2012 as the department works to provide excellent service to our clients, the departments and agencies across the Government of the Northwest Territories, as well as the current and prospective employees.

As Northerners we need to continue to build a strong northern public service that provides quality programs and services to the people of the North, generate employment opportunities for all, and attract and retain the best and the brightest people who are committed to their professions, their communities and the people they serve.

I would like to thank the Members for your ongoing guidance and support in sustaining a strong public service.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. With that, I would like to ask the Minister if he will be bringing in any witnesses.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Yes, I would, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the witnesses in.

Mr. McLeod, for the record, could you introduce your witnesses?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left I have Mr. Tom Williams, deputy minister of Human Resources; to my immediate right, I have Sheila Bassi-Kellett, associate deputy minister; to my far right is Michelle Beard, director of finance and administration.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Welcome, witnesses. Any general comments? Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I’ll be brief in my comments. Again, I mentioned this last year and I’ll mention it again this year. In the time I’ve been here, there have been a number of issues with Human Resources going back five or six years. I believe in the last three years under the guidance of the Minister and the management team in the department, as an MLA we don’t get as many calls or complaints from the public or the public service. I appreciate that. Obviously the public and the public service that you serve appreciate it as well. I think people are getting a much more fair shake when it comes to their dealings with Human Resources. I appreciate that. I’m sure they do too.

Going forward, if I could say one thing, I think, and I’ve mentioned this a number of times, I really think we need to start planning long term and doing some work with how the Aboriginal governments in the Northwest Territories are going to advance, draw down their authorities, and how it is that our public service is going to come together with the needs and requirements of Aboriginal self-governments around the Northwest Territories. We can’t afford to be stepping on one another’s toes down the road. I think the more planning and foresight we have on how that’s all going to work is going to pay dividends down the road.

Comments are brief, I know it’s late. Just a few comments. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** General comments. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you. I’ll keep my comments very brief too. The positions within the GNWT are growing each year. It seems like we’re adding new positions to our workforce. I’m not too sure what the plan is. Is there a time when I’m going to say we need to cut back on positions or hold it or to put a freeze on it? Also to continue to support the Aboriginal people into the government’s senior management into those type of positions.

I look forward to some of the initiatives that the Minister has embarked on. I think there are some real good ones. Laying out a plan, there are the baby boomers that are going to be retiring, the aging workforce. Of course there’s a new generation of young workers that have a little bit different work ethic sometimes and we have to train them. That’s part of what my upbringing was too. In my generation, we had a job and we kept with the job and learned from our parents. I look forward to some of the challenges that the Minister and staff are going to be coming up with and how to resolve them. I hope that we do well and that we continue to treat our people well within the GNWT. There are a lot of good people working for us; really good people. We continue to support them and encourage them to bring on other people into our workforce. I do want to say that we have good people working for us. I do want to say that they do a lot for us. I just want to leave it at that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. With that, I will allow the Minister to respond to the general comments. Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the comments. We put a very concerted effort into reducing our backlog and focusing on our workload and moving to a client service department. We require all of our employees to take client service training. I think we’re starting to see the benefits of that.

Planning long term, we know that 40 percent of our workforce will retire within the next five years so it’s something that we have to plan for.

Aboriginal governments drawing down their authorities, we are very cognizant of that and we have been looking at that, their requirements for successor rights and so on are areas that we have been exploring and we have just started meetings to look at what devolution will entail and so we definitely will be planning for that.

In terms of the increased workforce, we have taken some action, in terms of our staffing, so that we don’t staff as quickly in order to save costs. We are working with our Affirmative Action Advisory Group to look at ways to increase our affirmative action statistics.

In my opening comments I talked about our pilot project on associate directors and superintendents, we think that will help. We also have other ideas and initiatives that we will be undertaking. The cultural awareness will be a big benefit and we always say that our workforces are the most important asset and I think that I agree that we have a lot of good people working for us and we need to keep them and make sure that we also attract new people with fresh ideas. We recognize that the younger generation have a different approach to work ethics and what keeps them staying longer and we are trying to factor that into our recruitment initiatives and efforts. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. I don’t see any more general comments. What is the wish of committee? Detail?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** So maybe we can refer you to department summary page 3-7. We will move on to page 3-8, information item, infrastructure and investment summary. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Agreed. Moving on to page 3-9, information item, revenue summary. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Agreed. Moving on to 3-10, information item, active position summary. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Agreed. Moving on to 3-13, activity summary, directorate operations expenditure summary, $607,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Agreed. Moving on to 3-14, information item, directorate, active positions. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Agreed. Moving on to 3-17, activity summary, human resource strategy and policy, operations expenditure summary, $6.830 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Agreed. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe if I could, I believe the Minister has talked about the backlog and that was a big issue years ago. Just a quick question, is there still a backlog and if there is, when might you be finished dealing with the backlog of files at Human Resources? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we have to change our terminology. We are still calling it a backlog, but we recognize that every pay cycle it adds to our backlog. But from the original, when we consolidated Human Resources into one department and all the files were turned over, I believe there was something like 2,500 transactions that were backlogged. There probably has been another 2,600 transactions, what we call adding to our workload, but having said that, we have been able to deal with all of that and what we are still calling a backlog is about 936 now, so we are going to change our terminology and we are going to call it our workload, not a backlog anymore.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That’s good, thanks.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 3-17, activity summary, human resource strategy and policy, operations expenditure summary, $6.830 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Moving on to page 3-18, information item, human resource strategy and policy, active positions. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Moving on to page 3-21, activity summary, management recruitment services, operations expenditure summary, $3.969 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Agreed. Moving on to page 3-22, information item, management recruitment services, active positions. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Moving on to page 3-25, activity summary, corporate human resources, operations expenditure summary, $12.289 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Moving on to page 3-26, activity summary, corporate human resources, grants and contributions, contributions, $115,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total contributions $115,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Moving on to page 3-27, information item, corporate human resources, active positions. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Moving on to page 3-29, activity summary, employee services, operations expenditure summary, $14.099 million. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:**  Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a few questions on the benefits. The Sahtu has a special day designated as Sahtu Day, June 23rd. A lot of employees from the Government of the Northwest Territories are Aboriginal and Sahtu beneficiaries and this comes up every year in terms of them taking this day off. They are either told to take it through other benefits that they have incurred or they are asked to look at other initiatives. Is this something that the government would look at to honour Sahtu land claim day because if it hasn’t, then this year it will come up again. Some of the employees would ask that they could ask the government to allow them to take the day off without taking any kind of special leave that they have. I just want to be prepared to tell my constituents when I need to tell them when they do contact me on this issue.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister Bob McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was going to say I will authorize a day off for them, but my understanding is that they are entitled to civic leave, all the recognition of Aboriginal days, all days through the Sahtu land claims are recognized as civic, but I will confirm that for the Member.

**MR. YAKELEYA:**  Thank you, Mr. Chairman. He has made my day there, Mr. Chairman.

I want to ask another question. When some of the employees that do have to take off some special leave, I think the government has been pretty good with them on some leaves, like family sickness or there is a death in the family and they have some time off and there are some special circumstances that require more than their time off because of whatever they have to deal with in a family situation. So I think that is on a case-by-case basis, so I am not too sure if there is a general wide policy where cultural leave or custom leave would deal with that issue. So, again, that is something that has been brought up in my office on occasions that employees from the government want to help out with the families. So maybe a brief comment by the Minister would be sufficient.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We do have collective agreements that we are bound to follow, but generally in some of the areas that the Member has mentioned, the deputy heads are designated as the ones that can make the call. I think for the most part we try to be flexible, depending on operational requirements and I guess the severity of the situation. We do try to provide guidelines, but guidelines don’t always apply in every situation. That’s generally the way we operate. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Okay, we’re on page 3-29, activity summary, employee services, operations expenditure summary, $14.099 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Moving on to page 3-30, information item, employee services, active positions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Moving on to page 3-33, activity summary, regional operations, operations expenditure summary, $4.627 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 3-34, information item, regional operations, active positions. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a question on page 3-34. The breakdown from ‘10-11 in comparison to the page that appears, this is for regional operations, the regional allocation of employees on page 3-10, when I compare the two the numbers are different for the South Slave and the Beaufort-Delta. They’re out by a couple of employees and I’m just wondering why that is because if you go into the new year they seem to be accurate, but for ‘10-11 the reporting is just off a little bit and I’m just wondering why. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Minister.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I’d like to ask Michelle Beard to respond to that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Beard.

**MS. BEARD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The reason for the difference is the positions that you’re referring to came out of the strategic initiative funding. So originally they were located in the headquarters and then were moved out into the regional positions. So what you’re seeing is internal allocations of positions from headquarters positions into the regional positions.

**MR. RAMSAY:** That was my question, I was just trying to understand how many actual positions we were increasing regional operations by. Was it the seven or was it five or four?Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MS. BEARD:** We’re actually increasing them by seven.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Okay, page 3-34, information item, regional operations, active positions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** So if you can turn back to page 3-7, Human Resources, department summary, operations expenditure summary, $42.421 million. Agreed? Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Just one quick question, Mr. Chairman. On the contract services, I’m just wondering why we’ve gone up $1.4 million. Maybe just a quick explanation on that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That’s because of the 20/20 money and also money for collective bargaining. There are three collective bargaining negotiations that we’re getting ready for. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Let’s do this again. Human Resources, department summary, operations expenditure summary, $42.421 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Does committee agree that we have concluded the Department of Human Resources? Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** With that, I would like to thank the Minister, thank the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you escort the witnesses out?

What is the wish of committee? Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress.

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I will now rise and report progress.

# Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. SPEAKER:** Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please, Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 133-16(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2011-2012, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Madam Clerk, orders of the day.

# Orders of the Day

**PRINCIPAL CLERK OF OPERATIONS (Ms. Bennett):** Orders of the day for Thursday, February 24, 2011, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers’ Statements
3. Members’ Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Opening Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions

* Motion 37-16(5), Extended Adjournment of the House to February 28, 2011
* Motion 38-16(5), Seniors’ Home Repair Program

1. First Reading of Bills
2. Second Reading of Bills
3. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

* Tabled Document 4-16(5), Executive Summary of the Report of the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project
* Tabled Document 30-16(5), 2010 Review of Members’ Compensation and Benefits
* Tabled Document 38-16(5), Supplementary Health Benefits - What We Heard
* Tabled Document 62-16(5), Northern Voices, Northern Waters: NWT Water Stewardship Strategy
* Tabled Document 75-16(5), Response to the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project on the Federal and Territorial Governments’ Interim Response to “Foundation for a Sustainable Northern Future”
* Tabled Document 103-16(5), GNWT Contracts over $5,000 Report, Year Ending March 31, 2010
* Tabled Document 133-16(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2011-2012
* Tabled Document 135-16(5), GNWT Response to CR 3-16(5): Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act
* Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act
* Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Conflict of Interest Act
* Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Fire Prevention Act
* Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act
* Bill 18, An Act to Repeal the Settlements Act
* Bill 19, Municipal Statutes Amendment Act
* Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Evidence Act
* Minister’s Statement 65-16(5), Devolution Agreement-in-Principle, Impact on Land Claims and Protection of Aboriginal Rights
* Minister’s Statement 88-16(5), Sessional Statement

1. Report of Committee of the Whole
2. Third Reading of Bills
3. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 24, 2011, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 9:04 p.m.