



February 19, 2021

MR. KEVIN O'REILLY
MLA, FRAME LAKE

**Oral Question 532-19(2):
Environmental Remediation and Economic Recovery**

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you raised on February 10, 2021, regarding environmental remediation and economic recovery.

In my response to your question, I committed to sharing with you my letter, dated December 4, 2020 to The Honourable Seamus O'Regan, Minister of Natural Resources Canada, regarding the opportunity to expand the Orphan and Inactive Oil and Gas Wells Grant to include the Northwest Territories.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Wawzonek'.

Caroline Wawzonek
Minister
Industry, Tourism and Investment

Attachment

c. Mr. Glen Rutland
A/Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. David Hastings
Legislative Coordinator



December 4, 2020

The Honourable Seamus O'Regan
Natural Resources Canada
580 Booth Street, 21st Floor Room C7-1
HOUSE OF COMMONS
OTTAWA ON K1A 0E4

Dear Minister O'Regan:

I write to you in follow-up to my letter of October 14, 2020 with respect to an opportunity for the Northwest Territory's (NWT) Indigenous and other businesses for immediate economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic as well as laying a foundation for long term economic growth. As outlined in my previous letter, I am seeking the opportunity to expand the Orphan and Inactive Oil and Gas Wells Grant to include the NWT.

Not only are there projects ready to move forward in the short term, remediation work is poised to be a significant source of economic growth in the medium and long term across the NWT. In my conversations with Indigenous Governments and Indigenous Development Corporations as well as other northern businesses, there is significant interest in becoming involved in this work early in order to build capacity for future participation in this potential growth sector. I am conscious of the economic need that exists in neighboring provinces, but I propose that the cost to support projects in our territory would only be a modest draw on available funds. Additionally, I expect that in the short term, as we grow local capacity through any work, we are able to undertake in the Northwest Territories, we may need to engage our neighbours' technical expertise.

Further, I have recently been made aware of another Federal program designed to support Indigenous corporations in participating in oil and gas infrastructure development in Alberta and BC. This program, the Indigenous Natural Resource Partnership program, could also successfully include consideration of indigenously owned businesses in the NWT. This is an active conversation we are having with our NWT Indigenous Governments and there is strong interest to pursue these opportunities. The stated goals of the program, as well as its recipient limitations, are quite well suited to our Territory.

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Making the proactive oil and gas sector programs initiated by the Federal government to help western provinces available to NWT Indigenous and other companies could do a great deal as we emerge from COVID. It would support our numerous Indigenous businesses in the energy sector generate needed private investment opportunities and address legacy environmental liabilities. I look forward to speaking with you on how NWT can be included in these or similar programs in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'C' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Caroline Wawzonek
Minister
Industry, Tourism and Investment

c. Mr. Michael McLeod, M.P.
Member for the Northwest Territories

Ms. Shaleen Woodward
Principal Secretary, Executive and Indigenous Affairs

Mr. Martin Goldney
Secretary to Cabinet/Deputy Minister, Executive and Indigenous Affairs

Ms. Pamela Strand
Deputy Minister, Industry, Tourism and Investment