

MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE

FUTURE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY IN THE NORTH SLAVE REGION

June 9, 2016

MR. O'REILLY: I want to talk today about the future of renewable energy in the North Slave Region. The Northwest Territories Power Corporation recently cancelled the request for Expressions of Interest to introduce major renewable energy sources for the North Slave Region. Yesterday, the Minister of Public Works and Services tabled the North Slave Resiliency Study in the House. That study basically recommends against investing in renewable energy.

As we all know, the low precipitation in recent years has crippled the hydro-generating capability of our Snare and Bluefish facilities. More than \$60 million in subsidies have been provided by this Government. Before the election, NTPC issued a call-out for joint venture proposals to provide 10 megawatts of electricity through wind and solar. In April, we learned that the process was cancelled. A number of proposals were received, and significant effort went into those submissions. The parties that submitted proposals were told about the cancellation of the process through an e-mail, and some were not very pleased.

Renewable capacity isn't needed, the utility is reported at saying, because precipitation last winter has fixed our low water problems. Apparently, the decision to cancel the process came from the GNWT. I quickly reviewed the North Slave Resiliency Study last night, and I could not find much about climate change which may be driving low water levels. The report stated, "There is a large amount of uncertainty regarding climate change impacts to extremes, for example, the probability of more extreme droughts, the potential for increased inter-annual variability."

The analysis in the study is based on years of climate and water data, 30 years of climate and water data, but there were no predictions made on future water levels as a result of climate change that I could find in the study. Although we heard yesterday that the GNWT is about to start consultations on a new energy plan for the Northwest Territories, I am concerned that our direction is already being set by the North Slave Resiliency Study and the decision to cancel the Expression of Interest for renewables in the North Slave.

I am also worried about the future of the Arctic Energy Alliance and its programs to assist in the adoption of renewable and alternative energy to homeowners and businesses. I will have questions for the Minister of Public Works and Services later today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.