

## ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

### QUESTION 197-18(2): FUTURE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY IN THE NORTH SLAVE REGION

June 9, 2016

**MR. O'REILLY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I have some questions about the future of renewable energy in the North Slave region and I'll ask them of the Minister of Public Works and Services. I'd like to start with the North Slave Resiliency Study. I cannot see in the study where climate change models may have been used to predict water levels. Analysis seems to have been based on the past 30 years of data. Can the Minister confirm that the North Slave Resiliency study did not consider climate change and then no predictions were made of future water levels? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Public Works and Services.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Climate change was taken into consideration, but the focus was really on the previous 30 years and that is why one of the recommendation is to consider to upgrade and to keep monitoring our hydro production so that we can keep better statistics on the water levels and where we're going in the future with climate change. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks to the Minister for the response. The North Slave Resiliency Study basically recommends against investing in renewable energy in the North Slave. Can the Minister indicate what the position of this Government is regarding investment and renewable energy in the North Slave region?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I would like to start by reinforcing that hydro is actually a renewable energy and one of the most cost effective as well, and we have a good supply as related in the Member's opening speech. It's sufficient for 90 per cent of our needs at this time. Unless there's a major mine would we actually have to look at expanding upon that. So within the cost analysis it was shown that the current system as we have now is cost effective versus bringing in something such as a solar system which would cost millions of dollars, and that cost would actually have to be transferred into the rate payers. So we're on top of it, we're watching it, but one of the priorities within this Assembly is the costs of living. So we're really conscious that we want to support renewable energy but the most effective renewable energy options that we have at this time.

**MR. O'REILLY:** And I guess I do agree with the Minister in that the North Slave Resiliency Study did recommend against investing in solar, wind, and biomass. Hydro, yeah, we can probably spend a lot more money on that too perhaps, but we've already made a significant investment in Arctic Energy Alliance as the delivery agent for a variety of very successful energy conservation and retrofit programs over many years now. What impact will the recommendations from the North Slave Resiliency Study have on this investment that we've already started through the Arctic Energy Alliance and its programs?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** The NWT is actually the second in Canada in regards to renewable resources and I really want to keep that title. In fact, I would like to be number one if we could get there. So Arctic Energy Alliance is really key in distributing the renewable energy resources to communities, so we are committed to maintaining an Arctic Energy Alliance within our programs and projects to work with renewable energy within the NWT.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to thank the Minister for her commitment that the recommendations coming from the North Slave Resiliency Study will not impact in any adverse way Arctic Energy Alliance. But yesterday in the House the Premier announced that there was going to be a new energy plan for the Northwest Territories. We already know that NTPC cancelled work leading to renewable energy in the North Slave. The North Slave Resiliency Study recommends against solar, wind, biomass investment in the North Slave. It appears this Government has already started to make up its mind about renewable energy, at least in the North Slave. Can the Minister tell this House how renewable energy will be considered in the energy plan and whether that will be an open and transparent process? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Yes, the new energy plan will be -- we will try to consult as much as possible within the definition, so although right now at this point the study showed that within this region that we have capacity, that we're fine within the hydro system, the renewable energy system that we have currently, we still are focussing within our thermal communities. We need to get them off of diesel. This is really not sustainable energy and it's not good for our environment. So this is not only a concern for the Northwest Territories, this is national wide and international wide, so we've committed to working nationally and internationally on this issue. We take it very seriously and we will continue to research and stay abreast of current practises and as soon as the cost of alternative besides hydro becomes more cost effective than we will refocus and relook at that again because there have been really amazing results come in with the solar and the capacity of batteries, et cetera. So we're on top of it and keep watching it.