

**MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE**

**FEDERAL REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESSES**

**June 27, 2016**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. The federal government announced a review of the environmental assessment processes on June 20, 2016. This process is being led by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Ottawa says that an expert panel will engage broadly with Canadians, Indigenous groups, and key stakeholders and develop recommendations to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change for restoring public confidence in environmental assessment processes. Public input is invited until July 20, 2016, on the draft terms of reference for the expert panel. Following this consultation period, details will be announced on the members of the expert panel, and there will be a participant funding process for Indigenous peoples.

The big problem with the federal review is that the North is excluded. The draft terms of reference note, "matters related to northern environmental assessment regimes will be redirected as appropriate to the process launched by the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs to amend northern regimes. Matters relating to northern environmental assessment regimes are outside the mandate of this expert Panel." When I checked the Indigenous Northern Affairs Canada website, there is mention of Bill C-17 described as an attempt to fix the damage done to the environmental assessment regime done by the previous federal government. There is nothing about the Northwest Territories and the damage done by the unilateral changes to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act that resulted in the successful court challenge by the Tlicho government.

It is not clear how the federal government is going to approach our environmental assessment process in the Mackenzie Valley, including building a participant funding program other Canadians south of 60 are entitled to access. I will have questions for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations later today on what the federal review of environmental assessment processes mean for Northwest Territories residents and what the position of this cabinet is on this issue. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.