

KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE

Arctic Energy Alliance—Low Water Funding Contribution

Committee of the Whole—2016-2017 Operating Budget Review

Dept. of Public Works and Services—June 23, 2016

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. In the Minister's opening remarks she talks about \$3.5 million contribution Arctic Energy Alliance. I think I know where to look for that on this page. There's also a \$760,000 one-time enhancement. Is that located on this page or where would we find that? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The \$720,000 for the low water is included in the \$3.5 million figure. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, I wasn't asking about the low-water level, I was asking about the Minister's opening remarks, and there was a one-time enhancement to Arctic Energy Alliance to support residential and commercial energy conservation and efficiency programs. So just wondering where that shows up in the departmental budget. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that one-time funding, the \$750,000 is in the \$3.5 million I spoke to, it's in that line item on page 388 under energy programs, policy and development. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Guy. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Can the department explain how this one-time enhancement came about? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That was a transfer from the low-water monies that was incurred in the two years prior to this Assembly, thank you, and it was transferred to Arctic Energy Alliance. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the answer. So to just put that maybe in plain language: the money that's used to subsidize the diesel costs associated with low water levels, part of that extra funding was used so we could build capacity in the renewable side of things so that we wouldn't to keep, hopefully, paying money for diesel? Is that correct? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you. I'll let Paul answer that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that funding was allocated as part of the previously approved funding with last the government for low water to enhance the existing programs Arctic Energy Alliance has, and those are things like the commercial energy retrofit, homeowner retrofit, the rebate programs and all those things to help residents reduce their energy costs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Guy. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the answer, and it's the policy direction I certainly want to go in. Is this something that the department's going to continue because we just had the North Slave resiliency study that actually recommended against doing this. So what direction is the department going to go in with this? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The funds that are provided to the Arctic Energy Alliance are for all the communities throughout the Northwest Territories, not only the Yellowknife area. The bigger thing that should be noted is that we will be doing a new energy plan, and within that plan we'll be identifying for future years the direction of the department and where we should be going in the expenditures and revenues, that we'd be looking within that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.