

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

**GNWT POSITION ON CARBON PRICING**

February 2, 2017

**MR. O'REILLY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. On December 9, 2016, our Premier signed on to the Pan Canadian Framework on Climate Change. This is a good thing, but as usual, it was done with no consultation with Regular Members as to what the GNWT position should be. As recently as July 21, 2016, our Premier was part of a Yukon government news release, "Northern Premiers Confirm United Stance Against Carbon Price." Our Premier was quoted as saying, "a national carbon pricing strategy could not be viable in the Northwest Territories unless it alleviates or compensates for the high cost of living and doing business in the North. Until there are economically viable alternatives, carbon pricing mechanisms will not significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the Northwest Territories."

I would like to know what changed between July and December of last year and overcame the Premier's resistance to real action on climate change?

One thing that did happen was an election in the Yukon, where a new government was elected on November 7. Lucky for us here in the Northwest Territories, as this seems to have had some influence over our Premier's position.

What is next for us? Are we going to sit back and wait for the federal government to impose a federal carbon tax? Are we going to get our act together and design a carbon tax for the Northwest Territories that protects the remote communities and lower-income families and individuals? I see very little evidence that our Cabinet is doing anything with regard to a carbon tax. When I went to the public meeting on the Northwest Territories Energy Plan and Climate Change Strategic Framework in December, here in Yellowknife, there was no discussion of a carbon tax. Of course, this was before the Premier had signed on to the Pan Canadian Framework on Climate Change. What is going on?

By now, our government should have articulated a clear position that any carbon tax funds collected here should have no impact on our Territorial Formula Funding arrangement, and that funds collected will be used to offset impacts on remote communities and low-income families and invested into renewable energy. By now, we should know what specific tools have been identified to offset impacts, including the tax system, and that there will be specific public tracking measures and targets for greenhouse gas reductions. Mr. Speaker, there are lots of questions on our flip-flop positioning, lack of consultation with regular MLAs, and whether we will become leaders in climate change or continue to resist taking real action. I will have questions later today for our Premier. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.