

MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE

GIANT MINE OVERSIGHT BOARD

February 6, 2017

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, monsieur le President. We all know of the terrible environmental and financial legacy left by the Giant Mine here in Yellowknife. I'm here today to deliver some good news. The Giant Mine Oversight Board recently officially opened its storefront office here in Yellowknife on Franklin Avenue. This board is the public face of an independent environmental watchdog on the Giant Mine Remediation Project. It is set up under a legally binding environmental agreement among the following:

- The Yellowknife's Dene First Nation;
- North Slave Metis Alliance;
- City of Yellowknife;
- Alternatives North;
- Government of the Northwest Territories; and
- Government of Canada.

The board is a non-profit society run by a set of directors appointed directly by these signatories to the agreement. The board consists of technical experts in various fields, including environmental health, contaminated site remediation, water quality, and more. They live in Yellowknife and elsewhere to ensure that we have the best expertise to provide proper oversight. The office also has a staff of two here in Yellowknife, and they are in the gallery watching us today. The board reviews submissions to regulators by the Giant Mine Remediation Project, reviews monitoring results and management plans, and reports publicly. Perhaps most interesting, the board also has the responsibility to coordinate research and development of other ways to manage the underground arsenic. That includes investigating technologies to transform the arsenic into less toxic or non-toxic forms.

The funding for the board comes from the federal government at \$650,000 a year in 2015 dollars and is indexed to inflation for their oversight function. The research project funding is separate but ramps up to \$250,000 a year in 2019-20. It is also indexed to inflation and can be carried over from year to year. Any unused oversight funding can be rolled into the research program. The funding will last until all monitoring and maintenance is finished, or basically forever. This board and the agreement are a tremendous achievement for Yellowknife -- a government remediation project will now have independent oversight. This board will help to begin to build public confidence in what is happening at Giant Mine.

I also want to salute the work of the Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency, the environmental watchdog on the Ekati Mine that served as a model for what was negotiated for Giant Mine. That agency was established in 1997 and has a stellar reputation for technical oversight and working with communities. Perhaps these two

oversight bodies, the Giant Mine Oversight Board and the Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency, might prove to be examples for what can be done for the remediation of Norman Wells.

We in the North have developed interesting arrangements in co-management that in many cases are the envy of the world, and I've just talked about a couple of those examples, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.