

MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING RENEWABLE ENERGY INITIATIVES

February 7, 2017

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, monsieur le President. As the government consults on its NWT Energy Plan and Climate Change Strategic Framework, one non-governmental organization has done its part in pointing the way to a clean energy future, with minor funding but major commitment. Alternatives North has produced a way forward to 100 per cent conversion to renewable energy for the Northwest Territories.

The analysis is contained in the report "A 100 per cent renewable energy NWT by 2050 – Starting the Conversation," which I tabled in this House on November 2, 2016. It was also the subject of one of the legislative talks here in our Great Hall last week.

The really good news is that the Northwest Territories could indeed be 100 per cent renewable by 2050 using presently available, already proven technologies. The report established criteria and evaluated over 100 renewable energy options covering all sectors of energy use, heating, transportation, the mining industry, and electricity production. The report is very strict in rejecting any technologies that are not already commercially available.

It finds that in a 100 per cent renewable energy future, biofuels could provide up to 90 per cent of the energy supply in the Northwest Territories. Biofuels like fossil fuels can be transported and stored for up to several years between fuel deliveries. The key biofuels are wood, wood chips, wood pellets, compressed and liquid biogas, and bio-jet fuel. Currently, less than 10 per cent of the Northwest Territories' energy supply comes from local sources, but hydro, solar, wind, and particularly local biomass could increase that to 70 per cent which would create new green jobs in the Northwest Territories. New economic opportunity accompanies the conversion, with the need for everything from electricians trained in wood and solar, to sustainable forest managers and trades knowledgeable in the latest energy efficient construction methods. The report stresses the need to stop installing new non-renewable energy sources we will have to live with for years to come.

We've heard the Premier and Finance Minister say many times that there are no economically viable alternatives to oil and gas as energy sources in producing the NWT Energy Plan and Climate Change Strategic Framework. Our government should provide its analysis of the options presented in the Alternatives North report, including which renewable energy options it considers the most viable. Based on the analysis done by Alternatives North, GNWT should also determine and announce a timetable outlining which of the available options it intends to implement during the remaining life of this Assembly. I'll have questions later today, Mr. Speaker, for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Mahsi.