

## ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

### QUESTION 606-18(2): STATUS OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATER AGREEMENTS

February 20, 2017

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. Earlier today I spoke about the importance of our Transboundary Water Agreements. We need to finish these arrangements and fully implement them. Can the Minister tell this House and the public whether there are any actual negotiations going on with the governments of the Yukon, Saskatchewan, and Nunavut for the remaining agreements? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do know that the negotiations with Saskatchewan have occurred and are expected to resume this year. We have had some preliminary discussions with the Government of Nunavut to start the work towards a Transboundary Water Agreement. We do have an existing bilateral water agreement with the Yukon. This was signed in 2002. We are having discussions with the Yukon regarding the renegotiation of this agreement to better align it with the other agreements that we are working on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thank you to the Minister for his response. It looks like we have at least one of the three in active negotiations. That is helpful information. I wish the Minister could put that sort of detail on the departmental website.

Have water quality objectives and learning plans been started under any of the existing agreements with Alberta and British Columbia?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We are still a little early in the process. We do have the representatives on the board. They are continuing to meet. I will get an update on the plan, and I will share those with committee.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I appreciate the answer from the Minister. These agreements have been in place now for about a year and a half with Alberta and BC, and I really look forward to getting that information, and hope that the work has actually started. We actually have a more environmentally friendly regime in Alberta right now, and I would have thought we could make very good progress towards full implementation of that agreement. Are the bilateral management committees under the Alberta and B.C. agreements actually set up, and are they meeting?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We do have a bilateral management agreement committee with Alberta. We do have representatives on there. As far as the actual meetings, I will confirm that, but we do have representation at the meeting. I just don't have that level of detail. I will find out for the Members. The same can be said with the one with the Government of BC, we do have our representative's name. Again, as to the actual meetings that they have had, I will gather all that information and I will share it with the Members.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Again, I would like to thank the Minister for his answer. I did give him a head's up on what these questions would be. It looks like this progress and implementation is not happening nearly as quickly as it should be. I am just wondering: what is the problem here? Is it funding, political will? Can the Minister please explain the lack of publicly available information, real progress on finishing these agreements and fully implementing them? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the head's up that the Member gave me on his line of questioning. I can assure him that this is a partnership that we have to work out with our colleagues south of the NWT. I will work to get an update on all the work that has been going on. If there is a lack of engagement, then I will ensure that this government initiates that engagement, so we can have these very important transborder agreements not only completed but implemented.