

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

### NEW MINERAL RESOURCES ACT

March 7, 2017

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Mr. Speaker. Following the Minister's statement about mining, our government is committed to the development of a Mineral Resources Act as part of our mandate.

A request for qualifications was issued for a consultant to develop and carry out a public engagement process resulting in a legislative proposal for this work. It closes on March 17<sup>th</sup>. The objective is the development of a world-class legislative framework for mining that

- Encourages sufficient mineral exploration and production operations;
- Protects the land, water, and natural resources of the NWT;
- Modernizes the legislative framework and secures the greatest benefit for NWT residents;
- Provides clarity, predictability, and transparency for all stakeholders throughout the regulatory and operational processes;
- Provides employment and economic opportunities for NWT residents;
- Supports Aboriginal governments to build capacity for mining-related activities; and
- Builds consensus for mineral development.

All this sounds rather noble. I would like to suggest several specific issues and solutions.

First is to ensure that mineral exploration and development is fully subject to our integrated environmental management regime, the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. There should be no exceptions or exemptions for the mining industry, as is currently the case.

Next, community should have the ability to prohibit locating mineral claims within municipal boundaries to avoid land-use conflicts and disputes. The NWT Association of Communities has called for such authority, and this would likely require changes to the Surface Rights Board Act. We should also move this board to a co-management approach.

We should modify or end the free entry system to something more like the directed rights disposition system found in our oil and gas regime.

Capture geoscience data and information during exploration to build our knowledge base and avoid repeating environmental disturbance.

Review and adjust royalties from the extractions of public mineral resources. We are now in control and must ensure we retain fair and equitable returns from mineral

resources.

I look forward to opportunities to meaningfully shape a new Mineral Resources Act. I will have questions for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment later today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.