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MR. O'REILLY: In his opening remarks he talked a lot about the new initiatives that the department's doing. One of them was \$132,000 for a full-time tourism development officer position for the North Slave region. Can the Minister just explain a little bit more about what this position is going to do and whether that individual is going to be in a position to offer support to the visitor centre here in Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This initiative was brought forward just based on the success of tourism specifically in the North Slave of the number of tourism operators and licensees that are approaching the Government of the Northwest Territories to get licences up. The uptake has been significant, and we need to increase our staff on the ground to deal with this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the response from the Minister, but it didn't really answer my question. So is this individual going to be coordinating in any way or assisting the Northern Frontier Visitor Centre with their workload? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, this position is strictly for the operators. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Maybe I'm just a little bit thicker today, but then can the Minister tell me what this position actually does? Do they regulate operators in some way? What exactly does this position do? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This position, as I said, is to assist the operators and regulators. As I've said in the House earlier this week, we have some safety initiatives that new licensees have to follow up on to make sure they're compliant, so we want operators that are safe and operating the environment to ensure a very safe but compliant operator so we can ensure the safety of all the tourists in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Look, I'll be the first to admit I don't really know a lot about how tourism operators are regulated. So is this individual then going to look at applications for potential operators, check to see whether they've got insurance

coverage, go out and do inspections or something on their infrastructure or vehicles? Maybe the Minister could just get a little bit more specific about what this position really does. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to make it simple, I think I'll get the Member a job description of exactly what this position person does. I want to make it clear; there are 51 operators in the North Slave Region right now with five pending to come onboard, so that's going to be 56 operators. The majority of tourist in the Northwest Territories who come here right now, especially for aurora viewing, are concentrated in this area and we need to make sure that our operators are running, like I said, in a safe and compliant manner. Thank you, Mr. Chair.