

MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE

RESOURCE AND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION (REDI) INITIATIVE

October 3, 2017

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment received a briefing on the Resource and Energy Development Information campaign from Industry, Tourism and Investment last week. It was formally announced on June 22nd by the Minister when he said that it "will ensure these resources are used safely and sustainably." This sounds a lot like trying to build public confidence in our ability to develop resources in a responsible way. I would have thought that that should be our approach given the failed attempt to regulate hydraulic fracturing in the last Assembly.

Having met the Minister and his staff and reviewed the materials, this campaign is clearly about promoting resource development, something that ITI is very good at. It is not about providing balanced information about the benefits and risks of resource development or about providing opportunities for our citizens to be involved in decision-making around resource development. There is virtually no discussion of any negative environmental or socio-economic impacts, about trade-offs, or effectiveness of current efforts to manage resource development.

This campaign is about doing more of the same rather than introducing innovative ideas that would truly build public confidence in our decision making. Here are a few examples of what we could and should be doing:

- Appoint a science advisor to support informed decisions by Cabinet such as the recent initiative by our federal government;
- Establish an intervener funding program to level the playing field and ensure that Aboriginal governments, communities, and organizations can meaningfully participate in resource development decisions;
- Re-establish a roundtable on the economy and environment to facilitate a dialogue between NGOs and business interests, and to provide independent research on issues of the day;
- Set up an independent panel of experts to investigate and provide recommendations on whether the NWT should allow fracking, and under what terms and conditions; and
- Complete land use plans and protected areas to empower the conversation economy.

Pardon the pun, Mr. Speaker, but REDI will not get us ready for resource development. I will have questions for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment later today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.