

**KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE**  
**Thaidene Nene**  
**Committee of the Whole—2018-2019 Operating Budget Review**  
**Dept. of Executive and Indigenous Affairs—February 27, 2018**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I want to start by asking some questions about conservation planning. When can we expect that there is going to be a public announcement about Thaidene Nene being formally established? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we are still in the negotiating phase. We have a few more items to discuss. My understanding is they are working on those as we speak, and we should be in a position to come with an announcement as soon as they iron out these last few details. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Is one of these details the land transfer arrangement that has to be made with the federal government? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, my understanding is the land transfer agreement just has to be finalized, and again, my understanding is that we are very close to finalizing that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. In the Minister's opening remarks, and it is found in the budget address as well, there is \$440,000 of new funding for conservation area planning. Is any of that for Thaidene Nene? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, it is. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister tell us how much is for Thaidene Nene? This is going to be the biggest park that our government has ever established. National parks of a similar scale cost millions of dollars annually to manage. What portion of the \$440,000 is anticipated for Thaidene Nene, and is it enough? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, my understanding is that the \$290,000 is increased funding to the funding that is already there. As far as the funding that is already there, I don't have that information at my fingertips, but I will undertake to gather that information and share it with committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. \$290,000. I don't know what the square kilometres for our portion of that network of area are, but that does not sound like a lot of money to start coordinated management planning and so on. I know Parks Canada spends significantly more for similar areas or national parks in the NWT. I am just going to leave that with the Minister, but when can he provide committee with a costed plan moving forward for the management of the territorial portion of Thaidene Nene? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I will commit to provide committee with a briefing as we get closer and closer to the establishment of the park, and as well, we will have some numbers as to the cost to operate it. As we get closer to concluding our negotiations, I will keep committee informed and then provide them with a briefing before we finalize it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Yes, thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, I appreciate that, and I want to encourage the Minister to have a costed cash flow moving forward for our contribution toward the management of this area. I don't think \$290,000 is going to cut it, but I am happy to see what he is going to come forward with.

I wonder, though, too: can the Minister tell us whether we have any staff who are being trained for the management of this new area? Are there secondments going on with Parks Canada? What are we doing to get ready to assume management responsibility for this new area? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first I will just speak to the funding of the \$290,000. I said before it was to increase the funding for monitoring of the Canada protected areas, and \$290,000 was specifically earmarked for Thaidene Nene, and that was to conclude the planning and decision-making.

Again, as we get close to finalizing it, we have been working on some preliminary numbers as to what it might cost us. I will finalize those numbers. I will share them with committee.

As far as billing or capacity, we will work with ITI and see what is needed to enhance our capacity to monitor and look after the park. We will be putting that information together, and I will be glad to sit down with committee and share that as we get closer to finalizing it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. It looks like there is going to have to be a supplementary appropriation for this. I probably don't need to impress upon the Minister or his staff the significance of taking on a large area like this and managing it properly as a protected area equivalent to a national park. That does require a significant

investment of funds from our government.

There are also significant benefits that are going to come, and I look forward to having more of a discussion with him moving forward, but if we are going to really take this on, we have to do it right. We have to find the money to do it, and it has to be a serious commitment. There will be benefits for people in Yellowknife, and for Lutselk'e on the other side of the lake as well, but I just don't really get a sense that we are approaching this with the seriousness that it needs; but I'll stop there.