

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

### QUESTION 192-18(3): ARCTIC ENERGY ALLIANCE

MARCH 1, 2018

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure. There has been an oversubscription in many Arctic Energy Alliance programs for years, and now there is a waiting list. As we enter the last month of the fiscal year, can the Minister swiftly determine whether there are any unexpended funds across his department that could be re-profiled into the alliance budget to fund those applications on the waiting list? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to inform the Member that Infrastructure does not have any available funds ourselves, but, as of such, I have had a few emails lately about this program, and I have asked the department to check with the Arctic Energy Alliance to check within if any unsubscribed funds from any other programs would become available. We are also checking with other partners and other departments if there are any other funds that might become available that we can use to meet the needs for this fiscal year.

**MR. O'REILLY:** That is a good response. I thank the Minister for that, and, if he could let this side of the House know if he is able to come up with any money, that would be great. The draft NWT energy strategy paints a hopeful picture of future access to federal funds. I am concerned that, when federal funds are on offer for this essential need, we do not leave them on the table for lack of matching funding from our government. Sometimes federal dollars provide a convenient excuse for our government to cut its appropriation, as we have seen with boreal caribou monitoring and other programs. Can the Minister tell us whether there have been any approaches to the federal government to increase alliance funding, by how much, and when we will get a response?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Yes, I can update the House. We have applied under a federal program. It is called the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund. Under this fund, we want to be able to enhance the Arctic Energy Alliance. We are going to hear back on this program here very soon. What we have asked for out of that fund is \$7.5 million, and we will match \$2.5 million, which will double AEA's profile of money for the next four years if we were to be successful on this application.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I seem to be on a roll with the Minister, so I will keep going. I am sure he will let us know when we are going to get a response from the federal government. The Minister informed the House of an Alliance program review which is nearing completion. Can the Minister tell us when this completed review will be available for study by the standing committee and how the Minister will work with the committee to incorporate Members' input into the proposals for a redesign of alliance programs?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Yes, we are currently reviewing them. We have almost done our first draft of this report. It is going to be completed shortly, and we will probably

be sharing that later on this spring. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Thanks to the Minister for that. Hope springs eternal. Finally, I mentioned the waiting list for Alliance programs where some residents already made investments and were then denied rebates. Will the Minister allow these applications for Alliance rebates to be carried over and funded using 2018-2019 funds? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** The Arctic Energy Alliance relies on annual funding approved by the Legislative Assembly, and that is how we bring this forward, but we are doing our review. As we said, we are going to have a look. One of the things that we are looking at is how we optimize the program delivery, which will include whether we need to change the level of funding on some of these programs. Maybe we get rid of some programs, maybe we add some programs, but there are no plans to stray away from the fiscal year approach to how we do our programming and apply the money. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.