

MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE
FUTURE OF BLUENOSE EAST AND BATHURST CARIBOU HERDS
February 6, 2019

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. At the invitation of the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, I attended community meetings last month in Wekweeti, Gameti, Behchoko, and Detah on the future of the Bluenose East and Bathurst Caribou herds, and I want to thank sincerely the Minister for that opportunity.

There was a joint Tlicho government-ENR presentation that covered the recent surveys, collars, monitoring programs, harvest controls, wolf harvest incentives, land use, habitat and fire, education, and research.

The main comments and suggestions from participants included:

- harvest restrictions are not consistent with the Treaties;
- there is the need for more consultation before significant decisions are made;
- increased predator controls;
- reduce disturbance caused by mining (including temporary measures when caribou are nearby and permanent protection of critical habitat);
- stop harvesting of Bathurst Caribou in Nunavut;
- provide financial assistance for alternative food sources and/or replacement food subsidies;
- further monitoring and research is needed to understand the cause of caribou declines and getting youth and elders on the land; and
- we need greater transparency in caribou allocation decisions at the herd level and among communities that rely on each herd.

There does not appear to have been any community consultations on the content and details of the joint management proposals recently sent to the Weak'eezhii Renewable Resources Board. The standing committee likewise did not have an opportunity to review the proposals beforehand.

The proposals rely mainly on harvest reductions. Wolf hunting subsidies are to be increased, but there are no special temporary or permanent habitat protection actions included. There is nothing on financial assistance for community hunts or replacement food subsidies.

Very little of the Bathurst caribou range plan is reflected in the joint management proposal. No new funding for caribou initiatives have been identified in the Minister of Finance's budget address earlier today.

If we were to make any serious progress and take actions to save caribou, particularly the Bathurst herd, we need stronger leadership from ENR and new funding to support

the initiatives in the Bathurst caribou range plan. I will have questions for the Minister later today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.