

## **MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE**

### **GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SUPPORT FOR YELLOWKNIFE WATER LINE REPLACEMENT**

**February 13, 2019**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. The community of Yellowknife was forced to rely on the Yellowknife River as a safe and clean source of water due to arsenic contamination from local mining operations, particularly the Giant Mine. The federal government confirmed its liability for these expenses when it paid for the 1968-1969 construction of a pumphouse and a submarine water line from the Yellowknife River to another pumphouse south of Yellowknife. The Yellowknife River pumphouse also serves the Yellowknives Dene First Nations community of Detah.

The submarine water line is in need of replacement. The City of Yellowknife tried unsuccessfully to have this issue addressed during the environmental assessment of the Giant Mine Remediation Project from 2008 to 2013. The federal government and the GNWT would not provide any assistance.

After much discussion, the city contracted a detailed evaluation of two source-water options, replacing the current line or using water from Yellowknife Bay with additional treatment capability. The evaluation considered the possibility of an accidental release of arsenic from Giant Mine, at least until the chambers are completely frozen around 2050.

A set of weighted criteria were developed with city council to evaluate the two options, and these criteria included susceptibility to raw water quality changes, constructability, reliability of water supply, ease of operation, and 25-year life cycle costs.

Thirteen different scenarios were evaluated, and, in nine of them, the Yellowknife River source with a replacement water line came out on top. The Yellowknife River with pipeline option would cost \$33 million, and the Yellowknife Bay water source would cost about \$18.2 million. The recommendation is to go with the Yellowknife River and a water line.

The city has approached our government for funding and support. I will be asking the Minister of Infrastructure about these matters later today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.