

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

### RED ALERT PART 2

March 14, 2019

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Yesterday, the Premier gave the keynote speech he called "Purgatory and Persistence: The Case for Economic Self-Determination in the Northwest Territories" at the Arctic Oil and Gas Symposium in Calgary. "Purgatory," really? This red alert part 2 negative messaging won't encourage investment in the NWT and the transformative change we need. The Premier is stuck in a time warp where fossil fuels dominate the NWT and world economy. This is not going to happen, given climate-change realities, commodity prices, and technological change. Blaming the media and southern Canada won't change history.

The revisionist version of the Mackenzie gas project is also not helpful. GNWT bent over backwards to give away our resources. We signed letters locking in royalty rates for the anchor fields at the pathetically low federal rates, signed an unenforceable socio-economic agreement, and rejected most of the joint panel review recommendations to maximize benefits for Northerners. In the end, it was the developers who caused most of the delays. Market forces are what sunk the joint venture. If it had gone ahead, taxpayers would undoubtedly be subsidizing it now and for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, my patience is wearing thin with the megaproject approach to economic development put forward by the Premier and his Cabinet. This only makes us more dependent on non-renewable resource development, vulnerable to commodity prices, open for more control by external corporate interests, and subject to further boom-bust cycles.

An all-weather road into the Slave Geological Province to subsidize mining during a caribou crisis is no example of sustainable or responsible development. Mr. Speaker, there is always money for roads but nothing for the caribou crisis. Despite having a multi-party range plan for the Bathurst caribou developed over more than four years, we seem to be waiting until the caribou are gone, removing obstacles for the road.

Taltson expansion will be a billion-dollar boondoggle, based on the experience of many other major hydro projects across this country. It's not clean power. Just ask people in Fort Resolution about the impacts of today's Taltson. A project based on unconfirmed and hypothetical buyers will divert funding and effort away from building real energy self-sufficiency, especially in our smaller communities.

If the Premier and his Cabinet want transformative change, the message to Ottawa and the world should not be more of the same. We must build the knowledge economy through a polytechnic university, push energy self-sufficiency, and invest in the conservation economy. Non-renewable resource development can and should still play an important role, but, when this overshadows everything else, that's purgatory. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.