

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

### **GIANT MINE LONG-TERM FUNDING STUDY**

**May 28, 2019**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I attended a public meeting by the Giant Mine Oversight Board on May 1<sup>st</sup>. This was a very well-attended event, with over a hundred members of the public. The main issues included the ongoing research and development into a permanent solution to the toxic arsenic stored underground, and ensuring economic benefits to the NWT from the 10-year, \$1-billion active remediation phase.

Lots of questions were raised about the ongoing research program. The board recently signed an agreement with TERRE-NET, which brings together leading experts from Canadian universities in a variety of relevant fields. The board has signed contracts with the University of Waterloo for TERRE-NET to engage in a formal document review and attended the GMOB Research Workshop, where the results and initial focus of the joint research program were explored.

Some progress has been made on securing northern benefits from the Giant Mine Remediation Project in that a couple of collaborative advisory bodies have been established to develop a real strategy, but more needs to be done.

Another simmering issue is the unresolved work required to fulfill measure 6 of the environmental assessment of the Giant Mine Remediation Project. The federal government is required to investigate long-term funding options for the project and for contingencies, including a trust fund with multi-year, up-front funding, and to involve the public in discussing the options. Two drafts of the report were prepared by an accounting firm, but not much has been achieved. A scathing letter was recently issued by the board on the latest draft of the study that I tabled last week. The board says that the study lacks a conceptual framework for what is meant by "long-term funding" in relation to project requirements for ongoing maintenance and management, monitoring security, and public communications. Alternative delivery models for provision of these services have yet to be developed. Case studies from other jurisdictions have not been identified or considered in a faulty analysis of options. The so-called comparative analysis concludes that the current system of annual appropriations is the best option for long-term funding. This study is now almost two years late and will potentially jeopardize the current water licence proceeding.

An annual appropriations model for funding perpetual care of Giant Mine does not build any public confidence in this project and was one of the main reasons it was referred for an environment assessment in the first place. I will have questions for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources later today on what our government is doing to make sure this study is finished properly. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.