

## Responses to MOOSE FM Questions by Kevin O'Reilly, Candidate for MLA Frame Lake

1. What made you decide to run?

Frame Lake is my home and I want the residents to have good representation. I am a committed and active voice in the Assembly on the environment, social justice and democracy. I have a lot more to offer. That's why I am running again.

2. In a short summary, what qualifications do you have to lead your region as MLA?

Frame Lake riding has been my home for 28 years.

MLA Frame Lake: 2015-19; chaired Rules and Procedures committee; modernized elections with more voting opportunities, developed tougher rules for MLAs; developed only Private Member's Bill to clarify cremation services. Followed up on constituency concerns.

Yellowknife City Councillor: 1997 to 2006; chaired waste management committee and led negotiations on a cooperation agreement with YKDFN

Driving force behind the legally-binding agreement for oversight and research at Giant Mine. Work and volunteer experience in community engagement, collaborative planning and resource management.

Education: University of Waterloo: Bachelor in Environmental Studies, Masters in Planning

3. In a short summary, what is the platform you're running on?

**Social needs:**

Provide seniors with more Aging in Place programs, build more affordable and energy efficient housing.

**Children & Education:**

Offer affordable and quality child care; fund schools adequately; develop a NWT Polytechnic University with a Yellowknife campus

**Environment and Energy:**

Pass a Climate Crisis Act; protect key caribou habitat; use Talston hydro for South Slave

**Resource Development and Remediation:**

Make Giant Mine remediation work for northerners; ensure responsible mining and energy development

**Diversify and Stabilize Economy:**

Develop a new Yellowknife Visitor Centre and create tourism jobs in protected areas; Focus agriculture policy on food security; invest more in creative arts

4. If there was one issue affecting your region that you would like to change during your term, what would it be and why?

Use carbon tax revenue to create a retrofit fund so home owners could renovate their homes to make them more energy efficient. Home owners would repay the loan with the savings on their energy bill. This could be offered to businesses as well. We would need to develop more renewable energy options for this as well.

5. What is your strategy for tackling climate change in the North?

We need the authority, partnerships, reporting and investment into renewable energy to address the climate crisis. The Auditor General of Canada said GNWT's climate change efforts have failed. We need to set a lead department, and give them the authority to work with others inside and outside government. GNWT spending should consider impacts on greenhouse gas emissions and there should be strong reporting. The NWT Power Corp should focus on building energy self-sufficiency, not grids and big projects. We need to invest more in renewable energy sources to get our communities off diesel. This will reduce power bills for everyone.

6. What are your current and future plans for the NWT's mining industry?

Mining has its place when it is done properly and brings local benefits. We will be in a transition period as some of the mines will close. There are other mines that may be built but the main obstacle to new mines are market conditions and commodity prices, something we do not control. Settlement of outstanding Indigenous land rights would create a more stable environment if economic conditions favour new mine development. Further work is needed to develop our mineral rights system and I pushed hard for a fair, inclusive process and look forward to being part of it.

7. The cost of living is a common issue in the NWT, how do you think the territory should approach the issue?

We need to produce more of what we consume in terms of energy and food. Taking remote communities off diesel would decrease power costs for all. A retrofit program to fund renovations to make homes more energy efficient would help and create jobs. Local food production needs to be better supported to build food security. We need to encourage employers to pay a living wage so their employees can make ends meet. This results in a more stable workforce. I support universal childcare. It has been costed at \$20-25 million per year and would generate revenues to offset the costs.

8. With the population of NWT continuing to shrink, what ideas do you have to combat it?

It is easier to keep who we have than attract new residents. Maintaining and enhancing our quality of life through strong public services and programs is an essential part of population retention. We need to support NGOs in their work so they can keep employees and continue their work for community wellness and safety. We need to better market ourselves as a great place to live and promote access to outdoor recreation. If we offered more Aging in Place options for seniors, more of them would stay in the North.

9. How would you improve post-secondary education in the North, and is a Polytechnic university a good start?

We need greater investment in the entire education system to ensure that our students are ready for post-secondary education. I am a strong supporter of an NWT Polytechnic University with a campus in Yellowknife, as part of a strong network across the NWT

including the learning centres. It would attract investments and improve education and outcomes for all of our residents. We can focus the research on cold weather technology, mine remediation, traditional knowledge, language revitalization, all topics that are key to circumpolar development. We also need to offer or bring back important programs like nursing, education and social work.

10. What support systems do you want to implement to make sure Indigenous communities are not left behind?

We need to carry out the recommendations of the TRC and the MMIWG particularly, those that focus on healing. We also need to support and implement UNDRIP by reviewing GNWT legislation and programs for compliance. Settling land rights and self-government negotiations are critically important and will help create more certainty for the economy. The Affirmative Action Policy has not significantly improved workforce representation of Indigenous peoples. It is time to review it and develop specific actions. Supporting Indigenous language revitalization, traditional activities, arts and crafts will help to preserve the culture and traditions and requires significantly more funding and support.

11. Is there any infrastructure aspects of your region that you would like to see improved upon?

We need to build a new Yellowknife visitor centre that offers more information about local tour operators to provide more local benefits. It could also offer a place for local artisans to show and sell their work, in consultation with the local retail sector. The centre needs to be placed in a accessible location and funded adequately. GNWT needs to work with the City as it develops its destination marketing. Currently the GNWT pays more for a visitor in Dawson, Yukon than in Yellowknife. An extension to the Yellowknife airport runway would also allow us direct access to Asian markets.

12. What are your priorities in terms of healthcare in the NWT?

Participating in a national pharmacare program will lower drug costs and improve health. We need to continue to develop and promote the NWT midwifery program so women have more choices. A greater focus on mental health, especially for youth is needed. Greater support for employers who accommodate the work environment for their employee would help. The transition to a NWT Health and Social Services Authority has not led to an integrated system of care, tracking and reporting. These deficiencies at Stanton with regard to housekeeping, food and staffing need to be efficiently addressed and communicated to the public.

13. How would you confront substance abuse in the NWT?

We need to support the sobering centre, day shelter and safe ride programs. Housing First has started but more options are needed. I support the Yellowknife Women's Society converting Anica Inn into a residence. "Ready to Work" programs help get people into the workforce. We should explore the option of a managed alcohol/drug program to decrease negative behavior associated with trying to get more. When the client is ready, we offer help. We are currently sending people south for treatment and should use more on the land programs. We need to improve our aftercare and reintegration programs on their return.

14. What ideas would you put forward to expand our region's commercial district?

Building fibre optic redundancy is needed to avoid further disruptive outages. The promise of improved internet service along the Mackenzie Valley fibre link also remains unfulfilled. Energy infrastructure that provides adequate capacity and uses renewable sources could lower business costs especially if done as district heating systems. GNWT also needs to better support municipal governments and close the infrastructure and funding gaps that have continued to grow. Municipal governments can then do the proper planning and infrastructure support for business. GNWT should also improve its procurement processes, including Business Incentive Policy, and small business start-up assistance.