

MEMBER'S STATEMENT — KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

THAIDENE NENE STATUS

February 13, 2020

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. A number of agreements were signed to formally establish Thaidene Nene as a national park and protected area under GNWT legislation in August 2019. This was a monumental achievement in terms of building a conservation economy, and was very important for the community of Lutselk'e that spent decades negotiating this area. While our government attended the signing ceremony, there was no news release, and not even a Minister's statement. Quite frankly, the GNWT had to be dragged into the arrangement and resisted it at almost every step. This, despite the visitor, operations, and heritage centre that will be built in Lutselk'e, creating initial direct employment estimated at 18 positions, including eight full-time jobs. Canada will invest \$40 million toward infrastructure in the national park reserve operations in the first 12 years, and 3.4 million annually for operations thereafter. Canada has even committed to invest \$7.9 million toward the establishment and operation of the GNWT portion of Thaidene Nene. The GNWT has only committed to spend \$290,000 annually for the management of its portion of the protected area.

I was on the Environment and Natural Resources website recently and could not find an actual public registry as required under the Protected Areas Act. That's where I had hoped to find up-to-date information on the progress toward full establishment and implementation of Thaidene Nene. There is no public registry, and the information about Thaidene Nene does not appear to have been updated since last summer. I could find a regulation setting out the boundaries of the GNWT protected area that is a portion of Thaidene Nene, but no regulation for an establishment agreement and nothing under the Wildlife Act to establish the conservation area that is going to be part of Thaidene Nene, as well.

I will have questions later today for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources about this government's commitments to building a conservation economy and fulfilling its obligations with regard to Thaidene Nene and the Protected Areas Act as a whole. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.