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**Environmental Stewardship**  
**Committee of the Whole—2019-2020 Operating Budget Review**  
**Department of Environment and Natural Resources – March 10, 2020**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I would like to start on page 76, top item, climate change and air quality. Can I have an explanation as to why it's being reduced from last year? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It was a sunset. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Sunset of what, our funding or federal funding? Can I get an explanation? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It was GNWT funding, and it was for very specific actions that we needed to do. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I am not sure what those very specific actions were, but I think I will have to move on. The contract services here on this page has increased significantly. Can I get an explanation? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Nature fund. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. So federal funding is being used to buy what? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. \$1.066 million has been budgeted for the 2020-2021 for contract services; establishing, managing, and monitoring of candidate protected areas;

nature fund cost-sharing agreement; cumulative impact monitoring; climate change and air quality; and conservation planning. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I will just leave that alone for now. I want to ask a question about Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program. What are we doing to actually facilitate a response and implementation to the environmental audits? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For detail, I will ask the deputy minister to address that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister, Ms. Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We have been provided with a draft of the audit. We are looking at the recommendations and providing responses. Once we have the responses, we will release it, as we did the last time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. What kind of follow-up, though, is done from year to year to make sure that commitments are actually kept and implemented? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There is internal tracking. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I did not have my earpiece in. Could he repeat the answer? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I apologize. There is internal tracking. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Internal tracking is great. Is that tracking reported in any way? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now, no, but it helps inform us with our next audit. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. That internal tracking, is that something the department is going to be looking at reporting, maybe, through the state of the environment reporting that is to be done under the Environmental Rights Act, or some other way? It's just that, how is anybody supposed to know whether our government actually takes the environmental audit findings and its commitments seriously and actually carries through? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We can look into that through our SEMP reporting. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I just want to go back to the funding for climate change and air quality. Do we actually have enough funding in here? Is there a costed action plan that is related to the Climate Change Strategic Framework? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I will, with your permission, get the deputy minister to answer that question. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister, Ms. Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In the action plan, part 1 actions, there is funding available to complete them; part 2 actions, there is no funding source defined as of yet. We have been successful in accessing some federal funding to do some of the part 2 actions to date, and we continue to look for avenues to fund those actions through the federal government and other funding agencies. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I have looked at the action plan. There were no cost figures in it that I recall seeing. Can the department provide a costed breakdown or show what this \$1.9 million is actually being used for and how it relates to the action plan that was developed? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We can give it to you. Right now, it's program policy management, communication adaptation, climate change information and data management, adaptation programs, air quality monitoring, and that is presently where the funding is. Does the Member wish to have a complete breakdown of those areas? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake?

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. That would actually be helpful. I know I read the mind-numbing 48- or 50-page Climate Change Strategic Framework action plan recently, and it was basically a recounting of everything that the government was doing around climate change. I didn't find it terribly helpful. There was really no sense of priority. I have no idea where funds are being expended within that action plan and how that is actually going to allow us to reach the pan-Canadian framework target at the end of the day or even higher is what, I think, the planet requires. I would actually like that breakdown. Is that something the Minister can do –

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Sorry. Can you repeat just the very end? I think it switched over.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Can the Minister prepare that breakdown of the \$1.9 million in relation to the Climate Change Strategic Framework action plan? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We can read it right now, or we can provide it. Okay. We will provide the breakdown to the Members for this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I am not sure we are quite on the same page here. I don't want some sort of general, categorized breakdown. I'd like to know how much is being expended on each of the action items in the so-called action plan. That would be helpful. I would also like to know how that relates to the response to the Auditor General report on climate change. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For that detail, I will ask the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister, Ms. Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For clarity, the action plan was developed in collaboration with Indigenous governments, industry, and many other partners and contains actions that had been put forward by those groups that are priorities for them related to climate change. It is our intention that the Climate Change Council will work with us to prioritize part 2 actions. With respect to funding for individual actions, much of the work is being done by staff within the GNWT. The Member would receive information on ENR staff who are working on many of the action items in there, as well as staff from other departments, because the action plan is for all of the departments in the NWT, the climate change action that they are taking. There are many, many actions that are listed in there. All of those actions come together through a very large engagement across the Northwest Territories. Just to summarize, the Climate Change Council will help us to prioritize those actions. Whatever funding is available, if it matches up to actions in that action plan, we are jumping on that funding. Thank you, Madam Chair.