

KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE
Community Harvester Assistance Program
Committee of the Whole—2020-2021 Operating Budget Review
Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources — June 10, 2020

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. The increase to the Community Harvester Assistance Program, as I understand, this is probably even an over-subscribed program. Is there going to be some effort to continue to increase that, especially in light of the pandemic and so on? What is the status of that program? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe, and I probably will hear whispers if I'm wrong, that this program is actually under review right now. There certainly is a recognition of the importance of increasing access to the ability to undertake harvesting, but there is a recognition that there needs to be a real encouragement to young people and to provide mentorship. This does, indeed, cover the shortfall. This covers the difference between the actual subscriptions and requests, as compared to the base funding. There is not an intent at this moment in time to necessarily increase that further, but I think there is certainly a desire to ensure that there is movement toward supporting young people to undertake mentorship. In the meantime, the shortfall on this program has been topped up. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Any sense of when this review is going to be completed, and can I get a commitment out of somebody to share that with the Regular MLAs? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have a date here, and I think, just in light of the fact that, sadly, again, with COVID-19 there may have been some delays, may or may not, but I will make the commitment that we'll get that confirmation of the target date to the Member.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. That was the first part of my question. There were two parts, though. The second part was: can I get a commitment out of someone, a Minister, to share that in draft form with standing committee before it's finalized and released? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, that makes sense, now, the whispers I was hearing behind me. Yes, they will make sure that the report does get shared with the committee. Thank you, Madam Chair.