

MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE

CLIMATE CHANGE REPORTING

February 11, 2021

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. On January 11, 2021, there was a GNWT news release about our first progress report on our territory-wide approach to climate change. Unfortunately, there was not much to report, given the lack of progress over the last year. This may have been partially due to COVID, but it is also rooted in the faulty design of the climate-change approach from the last Cabinet that carries over into this Assembly.

As an example of the lack of progress, the decrease in greenhouse gas emissions last year was said to be a whopping 6 kilotonnes on total emissions of over 1,000, so less than 1 percent. Nowhere in the report does it say what the percentage of reductions was relevant to any baseline. The summary report claims that we are "generally on track" to meet the pan-Canadian framework target of reducing our 2005 emissions by 30 percent by 2030. However, at this rate, it is very clear we will not reach the target on time.

We still have an opportunity to shift course and join the growing international movement to save this planet from catastrophic climate change. The federal government signaled in its last Speech from the Throne that we need to move toward a net-zero target by 2050. This means that there are no new greenhouse gas emissions unless there are reductions in other areas of the economy, through actions such as energy conservation or efforts such as building retrofits or switching renewable energy for fossil fuels.

The carbon tax bill squeaked through last Assembly with a vote of 10 to 8 at second reading. At that point, I said, "I have consistently raised the need for an integrated approach to monitoring and public reporting of energy self-sufficiency, climate change, greenhouse gas reductions, carbon pricing, and the impacts on the cost of living, and this bill does not address that." The first attempt by our government to integrate reporting has not succeeded, in my view. There are few links drawn between the carbon tax retained, investment in greenhouse gas reductions from those revenues and other funds, and how all of this links to the pan-Canadian target. There are also very few details on how this government has actually changed its way of making decisions to better account for and integrate climate change. I will have questions later today for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources as the lead Minister on climate change. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.