

MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CANADIAN ARCTIC RESOURCES COMMITTEE

February 25, 2021

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. After 50 years of existence, the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, or CARC, is ceasing operation. CARC is a public interest, research, and advocacy organization committed to environmentally responsible northern development, support for the rights of Indigenous peoples, respect for the authority of northern governments, and increased international co-operation in the circumpolar world. It was established in 1971 in direct response to the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline proposal and the Berger Inquiry. In addition to research and policy analyses, CARC's activities include public communication, advocacy, contributions to the public policy agenda, and publishing books and reports. CARC often acts as an intervener, facilitator, and data repository, and has facilitated significant conferences on the Arctic. CARC is a registered charity operating under federal law. It is governed by a board of directors.

To quote the current chair and NWT resident, Lois Little, "There is a tendency for organizations to just keep going. We looked at who is in the best position to influence current and future decision-making in the Arctic, and we decided others were better positioned to do this, so we decided to step aside. The North is a very different place from what it was 50 years ago. Northerners have regained a lot of control over lands and governance, and they don't need us to help them to be heard any more."

There are still big questions out there about what sustainable development looks like in the Arctic, and the impacts of international problems such as climate change and contaminants. Northerners have the capacity to take on these issues and to make themselves heard on national and international stages and in new ways and places that didn't exist when CARC was born.

I am proud to say that I served as CARC's research director from 1995 to 2005. I set up and ran CARC's Yellowknife office and coordinated the Northern Minerals Program that included interventions in Canada's first three diamond mines. We helped secure benefits from diamond mining, including legally-binding environmental agreements, the genesis of the protected areas strategy, a heritage fund, and more. There were lots of mentors and great people, including Robbie Keith, Terry Fenge, Lindsay Staples, David Schindler, Tony Penikett, and many others. Much of that work continues to be relevant today. The values and spirit of CARC continue to guide much of the work I do as a Member of this Assembly. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.