

KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE
Community Transfers for Tourism Support
Committee of the Whole
2021-2022 Operating Budget Review Dept. of Industry, Tourism and
Investment
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MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I look forward to maybe a large supplementary appropriation, then, to assist with that work. I want to ask a question about the community transfer initiatives on 211. The amount there is actually declining, and I would like an explanation as to why it is declining in the time or whether, in fact, it should be actually increasing in terms of economic relief and recovery. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would propose to have that go to Deputy Minister Strand, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Strand.

MS. STRAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. That decrease of \$94,000 was the increased funding that went to Tuktoyaktuk in response to increased tourism activity, but I would like to note that it was in addition to the current EDO, economic development officer, funding that still remains in place for the community. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I am concerned, then, that we are actually reducing money to a community that now has an all-weather road. Hopefully, we can re-open later this year to allow tourism to start. Why are we reducing this funding now? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's a sunset, so it wasn't a reduction so much as this was the end point of the funding that was put in place when the road opened in order to help ramp up and be ready for tourism. Certainly, Madam Chair, what the intention is now is to monitor the reopening and to determine whether or not a position is still required and, if so, to, then, go back and seek that funding to have it return. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I look forward to that money being returned. While we are on the topic of new roads and so on, is there any specific funding in the budget here for assisting Whati in getting ready for a road that is supposed to open in November of this year, and if there is no specific money identified, why not? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are working actively with the Tlicho government and with the Whati government to determine what, in fact, they are wanting to see in terms of programming. At that point, there are quite a number of pots of funding that already exists under SEED, under tourism, that would be available to support whatever they determine to be the projects that they need. There is not a dedicated line item to the Whati road, or to the community of Whati as a result of the road, but it is more of a soft commitment that we are available and ready to work with them to help realize proper tourism, given the lessons learned from the Tuktoyaktuk road. Thank you.