

KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE
Wood Chip Biomass Systems
Committee of the Whole—2021-2022 Operating Budget Review
NWT Housing Corporation—March 10, 2021

MR. O'REILLY: Okay. Thanks, Madam Chair. I just wanted to make sure that is on somebody's radar. While I am at it, of course, I am going to call out my insurance company, Aviva: thank you very much for cancelling our policy over the holidays. Look, wood pellets are good, but what is even more important I think in the more remote communities is wood chips, the ability to do wood chips, because you don't have to pelletize them. You can go down and harvest willows beside the river, and you can turn them into wood chips and burn them. I think Fort McPherson had done some work on this. What is the Housing Corporation doing in terms of looking at wood chips as a potential biomass source? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have President Tom Williams respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Madam Chair, certainly, looking at alternative energy, it's important for us. O and M is the biggest part of our budget, so looking at reducing O and M through biomass or through other energy efficiencies is huge for us as a corporation. We work with our communities. We have a program out there that is suited. It's a very flexible program. It's called the community housing support initiative program, and if communities have a desire to go down that path, like the Hamlet of Aklavik did, they got into a biomass project last year. They asked the Housing Corporation to buy into the project, to use that service, the biomass product, to heat one of our six-plexes in Aklavik. It's a good arrangement. It's helping make their project viable, but at the same time, we are using an alternative heating source for that infrastructure. We are always open to it. We always encourage communities. Our program is very flexible. If they have an idea, let's talk about it. We are open to these discussions because reducing energy consumption and cost is a big thing for the corporation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I appreciate that. Is there any specific work that the Housing Corporation has done or is interested in doing with wood chips as opposed to wood pellets? Wood chips, I think that is the way we have to go here. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. As far as I know, we are just working with the wood pellets, and the wood chips would be something that we would have to have a further discussion about. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I want to encourage the Housing Corporation to be a little bit more proactive on this front and not just sit back and wait for somebody to come to you. If you have a new four-plex you are setting up in a community that does have potential access to wood chips, look at it as a potential. Do it as a pilot project. I am sure you could partner with Aurora Research Institute and Arctic Energy Alliance. I think there would be money out there to do that kind of stuff, so I want to encourage you guys to be a little bit more innovative and look at doing a pilot project with wood chips. Thanks. That is all I have got. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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