

MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE

EVALUATION OF ENERGY INVESTMENTS

June 1, 2021

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Monsieur le President. We don't have to look far to see the mounting impacts to climate change. Extreme events such as high water levels, sea ice disappearing at unprecedented rates and new species arriving in the NWT, like magpies and cougars, are all signs of the need to change the way we use energy. The latest modelling shows that to prevent the worst climate effects, we must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45 percent by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050.

It's not clear how our government is evaluating our investments in energy projects. The Social Environmental Justice Organizational Alternatives North recently released a study, quote: "Evaluating NWT's Renewable Energy Technologies". The report asks the three central questions for evaluating projects and emission reductions. Which source of emissions should we act to cut first? Well, greenhouse gas emissions from electricity production get a lot of airtime. This source is only 5 percent of NWT emissions. Adding in community-based heating and transportation emissions still only totals 25 percent of our emissions.

The biggest source of NWT emissions is resource extraction and transportation outside of communities, accounting for 75 percent of total emissions. That's where we may need to start.

What technologies to select? We can't be banking on technologies of tomorrow or projects without funding that will take years to construct, if ever. The crisis today is to avert an emergency tomorrow. We need technologies and options that are ready to go now, such as reasonable diesel and biomass.

How do we choose where to get the biggest impact for the dollars spent? We must evaluate the basis of lifecycle cost per ton of emissions saved. Each stage in the instruction use and disposal of a technology comes with a cost. Options that use less funding to achieve greater lifecycle reductions are where to put our money. I'll have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure on how our government is evaluating energy investments and emission reductions. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.