



June 12, 2024

HONOURABLE CAROLINE WAWZONEK
DEPUTY PREMIER
MINISTER OF FINANCE
MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER CORPORATION

Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories

I am writing to confirm your Mandate as Minister of Finance, Minister of Infrastructure, and Minister Responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. As part of your Finance portfolio, you will also chair the Financial Management Board. You have also been appointed Deputy Premier.

As the Executive Council (Cabinet), of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), we are embarking on a collective journey that will lead the Territory through a period of transition and transformative change over the life of the 20th Legislative Assembly. Together, we will advance our shared vision of a Northwest Territories (NWT) that thrives in all aspects, promotes the use and advancement of our human and natural resources, establishes and maintains sustainable fiscal management, and advances cooperative governance with Indigenous governments.

Our collective success in achieving the Priorities of the 20th Legislative Assembly (the Priorities), requires the will and commitment of all Members of the Legislative Assembly to work together in their respective roles for the benefit of the residents of the NWT. In the spirit of consensus government, I expect you to maintain constructive, open, respectful, and collaborative relationships with both your Cabinet colleagues and Regular Members. The Guiding Principles and Process Conventions set out the core principles for communication, transparency, accountability and inclusive decision-making essential to effective consensus government in the NWT. As a Minister, you are accountable to the Legislative Assembly for upholding these principles, for your leadership, for the performance of your responsibilities, and for decisions made by Cabinet.

The GNWT is only one of the governments in the NWT. Collaboration with Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations is fundamental to delivering our Mandate, and the NWT has the potential to demonstrate to Canada and the world what collaborative governance between Indigenous and public governments can achieve.

As a Minister, you should advance reconciliation and good governance as you work to implement the Mandate through commitment to achieving the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; working to advance, settle and implement Indigenous rights agreements; implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry Calls to Justice; information-sharing and innovation through partnerships with Indigenous, federal, and community governments, non-governmental organizations and private industry; and honouring the GNWT's dedication to openness, transparency, and accountability.

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I expect Ministers to strengthen government-to-government relationships with Indigenous governments and advance issues of shared interest by jointly engaging with the federal government to increase funding to the NWT.

The Priorities of the 20th Legislative Assembly will guide our work through a challenging time. The GNWT must shift toward more collaborative, coordinated approaches to delivering programs and services, ensuring they are designed with a person-centred approach that prioritizes equity and ease of access for all residents. Departments will need to engage, collaborate, and communicate with each other across government in order to provide Cabinet with the best advice and most comprehensive options for consideration. Recognizing this need, I have not assigned symbolic client-based portfolios for Youth, Seniors, and Persons with Disabilities in this government. Instead, I expect all Ministers to direct their departments to work together to meet the needs of diverse client groups effectively and equitably within their department's existing establishment policies, and to find policy solutions that are person-centred by design and promote cohesive, efficient program and service delivery. The GNWT has identified Mandate Commitments aligned with each of the Priorities to realize this vision. I expect you, in collaboration with Cabinet colleagues, to use the appropriate Committee of Cabinet to advance Mandate commitments and develop coordinated proposals for Cabinet's consideration.

The GNWT has an amazing workforce, one which continuously strives to provide services and programs to the best of their ability to residents. As Ministers, we must provide public servants with the guidance and tools necessary for them to work with us in our commitment to serving the people of the NWT. I ask that you lead by example to show that collaboration is the key to success. Strengthening relationships and building new ways of working together will require innovation, creativity, adaptability, and humility across government and throughout the public service. We must conduct ourselves with professionalism and integrity, maintain confidentiality on all matters related to Cabinet and related discussions and proceedings, and never lose sight of our shared vision of an NWT where people are supported in the ways they wish to live, work, and grow.

The impacts of climate change demand immediate attention and should underpin responsible decision-making. Floods, wildfires, and permafrost degradation increasingly impact our operating context and are a source of strain financially, culturally, and emotionally. As a government, we must be responsive in the face of a changing environment and take action that instills public trust in our ability to support residents and meaningfully addresses the causes and effects of climate change.

We are faced with the challenge of providing the programs and services that residents expect and need while operating within a constrained fiscal reality. While this is a difficult task, it is not an impossible one. We have the opportunity to restore fiscal balance to the GNWT and set the Territory and its residents on a path for long term success through sound government spending. We will be guided by the Fiscal Sustainability Strategy to meet the challenges we face over the next four years, including unknown challenges that will inevitably arise, while also allocating government spending to appropriately address the Priorities of the 20th Legislative Assembly. By ensuring our fiscal house is in order, we will provide certainty and security for residents now and into the future.

In addition to ensuring that we are focusing our existing resources to have maximum impact, we must focus on economic development. This focus includes bridging the significant infrastructure gap between our Territory and the rest of Canada, as the well-being of residents is directly impacted by the strength and resiliency of infrastructure in the NWT. You are responsible for interdepartmental and intergovernmental collaboration to help streamline regulatory processes and maximize the benefits of development for Northerners. By supporting the development of suitable and affordable housing, transportation networks, clean and reliable energy systems, and digital infrastructure, we will enhance our economic potential, improve quality of life for residents and communities, enhance opportunities for education, skill development and entrepreneurship, and lay the groundwork for future growth and sustainability.

The Priorities of the 20th Legislative Assembly recognize that individual, collective, and intergenerational trauma is behind many of the health and social challenges impacting NWT families and communities. Colonization and systemic racism are root causes of this trauma for Indigenous peoples and must be addressed to reduce and prevent mental wellness and social issues. Cultural safety, including easy and equitable access, must be at the center of policy and program design. Advancing cultural safety requires engaging in meaningful anti-racism work individually and systemically. You are responsible for leading by example in this respect. Indigenous leaders have expressed a strong desire for the GNWT to engage them as partners in addressing the mental wellness and social issues facing residents by removing barriers and supporting the design and delivery of culturally appropriate, person-centred programs. You are responsible for supporting this by ensuring interdepartmental and intergovernmental cooperation, which includes advancing Integrated Service Delivery, and fostering a culture of solutions-oriented collaboration.

Our role as Cabinet is pivotal in guiding our government to achieve a shared vision for the future of the NWT. Together we can build the foundation for a united, resilient, and prosperous Territory grounded in true partnership and collaborative governance. I trust that you will work tirelessly beside me in the challenging and rewarding task of leading the GNWT to realize the fullest potential and aspirations of the NWT and its peoples; today and for generations to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R.J. Simpson".

R.J. Simpson
Premier

Attachment

Minister of Finance

As Minister of Finance, you are responsible for directing your Department to carry out its Mandate as set out in the *Department of Finance Establishment Policy*, which includes obtaining, managing and controlling the financial, human, information and technology resources required to support the implementation of Government of the Northwest Territories' policies and programs and ensuring effective, efficient and economical management of financial, human, information and technology resources. You are also responsible for regulating the insurance industry and controlling the sale of liquor and cannabis products in the Northwest Territories. To achieve these goals, your Department engages in a broad range of activities that you continue to be accountable for.

In addition to the Departmental goals, you will undertake the following to support the achievement of the Government's Mandate:

- Advance reconciliation and good governance by:
 - Continuing to support the delivery of 'Living Well Together', the mandatory online training program for all GNWT employees;
 - Recruiting, training, and promoting a public service with the knowledge, competencies, and humility required to support reconciliation;
 - Developing a public service that is representative of the Indigenous population of the NWT;
 - Developing and implementing an Employee Satisfaction Action Plan that includes information gathering and policy initiatives; and,
 - Updating the IT Business Case template to ensure online service delivery is considered early in the development of a project proposal.
- Improve the suitability, accessibility and affordability of housing options in the NWT by:
 - Developing an in-depth, territory-wide housing needs analysis/assessment in partnership with Housing NWT, Indigenous Governments and community governments.
- Strengthen the economic foundation of the NWT, support the development of the private sector and community capacity, encourage a diversity of economic activity across sectors, and reduce the cost of doing business in the NWT by:
 - Applying the Macroeconomic Policy Framework to all proposed initiatives and existing programs with economic components to ensure that decisions are based on evidence and recognize important economic implications;
 - Advocating to CRTC for improved affordability, quality, reliability and competitive choice for broadband services in the NWT; and,
 - Revising the vendor complaint process and continuing to implement the vendor performance management policy.

- Strengthen preventative measures, public awareness and improve access to trauma-informed, culturally appropriate health care by:
 - Continuing to support employee development in health care professions through the Indigenous Development Training Program; and,
 - Supporting increases in the number of health care professionals in the NWT through the established Health Recruitment Unit that will work with HSS, NTHSSA and the TCSA to identify qualified candidates and promote positions within the organization.
- Prevent, interrupt, and address the effects of trauma by:
 - Continuing to implement the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework and Action Plan to ensure that the policy initiatives, programs, training and resources are reviewed and developed to be trauma-informed and culturally appropriate, and that barriers to access are removed;
 - Continuing to collaborate with the Indigenous Employee Committee and the GNWT Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion to review new and existing programs and initiatives with an anti-racist and cultural safety lens.
- Enhance the safety of residents and communities by:
 - Providing financial support to evacuation emergency relief program.

In addition to the Mandate objectives listed above, you are also accountable for:

- Leading the GNWT in the implementation of the fiscal sustainability strategy and stewarding the fiscal health and sustainability of the GNWT through ongoing efforts to increase revenues, reduce expenditures and ensure every public dollar spent serves the needs of residents and communities;
- Leading the development and implementation of the Indigenous Procurement Policy with support from the Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs;
- Supporting the Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs in the review and update of the Negotiated Contracts Policy;
- Leading the advancement of Phase 2 of amendments to the *Property Assessment and Taxation Act*, in collaboration with the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs; and,
- Advancing amendments to the *Payroll Tax Act* and *Public Service Act*.

Minister of Infrastructure

As Minister of Infrastructure, you are responsible for directing your Department to carry out its Mandate as set out in the *Department of Infrastructure Establishment Policy*, which includes providing services to the Government of the Northwest Territories with respect to the planning, design, construction, acquisition, operation and maintenance of government infrastructure; providing services to the public through the provision of petroleum fuels, marine freighting, driver and vehicle licensing and regulatory safety services; providing an enterprise-wide program focused on managing the information assets of government; and, promoting the development and increased use of energy efficient and renewable energy technologies, and the provision of regulatory safety services to the public. To achieve these goals, your Department engages in a broad range of activities that you continue to be accountable for.

In addition to the Departmental goals, you will undertake the following to support the achievement of the Government's Mandate:

- Advance reconciliation and good governance by:
 - Defining ownership opportunities for Indigenous partners of the Taltson Hydro Expansion Project, and growing capacity and creating a framework for economic investment in the project;
 - Working with the Tlicho Government to advance the Tłı̨chǫ Transmission Line to enhance energy security in the region while lessening our reliance on diesel; and,
 - Undertaking a review of the governance and operating models for Marine Transportation Services.
- Strengthen the economic foundation of the NWT, support the development of the private sector and community capacity, encourage a diversity of economic activity across sectors, and reduce the cost of doing business in the NWT by:
 - Working with Procurement Shared Services to include requirements for training and targets for apprentices in all Infrastructure Design-Build projects.
 - Developing and releasing a new strategic approach to energy with targets that guide investment in cooperation with ECC and ITI;
 - Advancing planning and design of Taltson Hydro Expansion; and,
 - Working with the Economic Advisory Committee to finalize and implement the Yellowknife Airport Strategic Plan.
- Enhance the safety of residents and communities by:
 - Developing and launching a new highway conditions map and reporting system (Drive NWT) that links the travelling public with real time information on highway conditions, including cameras, traffic counters and environmental and weather information;
 - Researching, assessing, and undertaking feasibility studies for innovative, emerging technological solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
 - Working with MACA and Housing NWT to undertake policy, research and scoping to advance work towards the creation of an NWT *Building Standards Act*; and,

- Developing and implementing a new Safe Driving Campaign as part of interagency efforts under the NWT Alcohol Strategy to increase awareness of risks of impaired driving.

In addition to the Mandate objectives listed above, you are also accountable for:

- Advancing construction of the Mackenzie Valley Highway;
- Ensuring Marine Transportation Services (MTS) operations prioritize community resupply over other activities;
- Exploring the Fleet Consolidation Initiative to seek efficiencies and economies of scale related to procurement, maintenance and evergreening of GNWT-owned vehicles; and,
- Optimizing office space usage.

Minister Responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation

As Minister Responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation (NTPC), you are responsible for directing NTPC to carry out its Mission to generate, transmit and distribute clean, reliable, and affordable energy to the Northwest Territories, in accordance with the *Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act*, to enrich the lives of Northerners and encourage living, working, and investing in the Northwest Territories.

In addition to the NTPC's goals, you are also responsible for:

- Working with the NTPC Board to develop an annual strategic planning process that supports effective reporting and increased transparency; and,
- Working with the NTPC Board on the development of industry-standard major project processes, improved risk management and budgeting, and the integration of innovation into decision making/planning processes for the NTPC.