

April 11, 2025

R.J. Simpson  
Premier, Northwest Territories

CANADA'S NEW DEMOCRATS  
LES NÉO-DÉMOCRATES DU CANADA

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Dear Premier Simpson,

With appreciation for your letter dated April 4, I welcome the opportunity to offer a response to the issues you've outlined as important to the people of the Northwest Territories.

Northern, rural and remote communities need a government that listens to their needs and recognizes the contributions that they make to the economic well-being of the entire country. New Democrats not only want to make life easier for people in the NWT, but we want to work together to ensure people are getting the services they need while reducing the cost of living. We know that communities are best-suited to serve their needs, and require the fiscal flexibility to make investments for their own betterment.

When it comes to resource extraction and economic development, we know that we must develop these resources in a sustainable way. Communities must be at the heart and have a seat at the table during any part of the planning process. We will replace mere consultation with a standard of free, prior and informed consent for Indigenous communities affected by government policies. Opportunities and benefits of projects should go to the Indigenous communities that want them, not the CEOs and billionaires who force them through.

New Democrats recognize and respect treaties, and we support any Nations and Métis building or re-building their governance structures. We will push for the federal government to return to negotiating with the Akaitcho and the Dehcho on their land claims and self-governance, because it shouldn't take 30 years to complete these agreements. And we will push for Indigenous leadership to be at the table in trade negotiations with Trump to ensure Indigenous Treaty rights are never sacrificed.

The NDP will work to bring health care closer to home for NWT residents. We will push for more family doctors and nurses in every community, to close the funding and infrastructure gaps for health care services in small rural northern communities, and the

right for Indigenous people to access traditional medicines. That includes a plan to provide housing and facilities for family doctors and primary care teams to keep healthcare providers in the North.

We will work in partnership with communities to push for improved access to mental health and addiction treatments, investments in indigenous healing centres and traditional healers, an action plan to prevent suicide, and Indigenous-led, culturally appropriate home care and long-term care is available for Elders, in their home communities and languages.

The government needs to undertake a massive building plan, building more of what we need in NWT and getting shovels in the ground faster, using Canadian products to do it. The NDP's Build Canadian, Buy Canadian plan – a national public infrastructure and procurement strategy – can be applied to regional projects such as the Mackenzie Valley Highway and to boost investments in shovel-ready infrastructure projects, like transit, community projects, health centres, and building homes.

Northern communities have been seeing the effects of climate change long before the rest of Canada, and those effects are having a serious impact on Northern livelihoods. Any solutions to helping communities adapt to and mitigate against climate change must empower that community and create good jobs.

In recent years, we have relied on the military to help battle wildfires and support communities because local, provincial, and territorial wildfire-fighting services have been overwhelmed. New Democrats support the calls for the creation of a national wildfire-fighting force as a homegrown response that is timely and cost-effective.

Protecting Canada's Arctic sovereignty must include investments in Indigenous people and Arctic and territorial communities, and these decisions need to be made through cooperation, consultation and consent with the people who live in the North. That includes better schools, more reliable power, and improved health care throughout Canada's Arctic, as well as investments in housing. Protecting Arctic sovereignty also requires defense investments and New Democrats are committed to increasing defence spending to two per cent of Canada's GDP by 2032. This includes increasing wages for Canadian Armed Forces members, completing the deep-water port in Nanisivik, the paving of airport runways in northern communities, building new small craft harbours, and new search and rescue stations. Enhancing the capacity of the Canadian Rangers is also important, ensuring Rangers are properly compensated and reimbursed in a timely manner for the use of their own equipment.

New Democrats are committed to working with GNWT, Indigenous people, and

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Northerners to improve the economic, social and cultural well-being of the Northwest Territories.

Thank you,

Kelvin Kotchilea, NDP candidate, NWT

