

GREENHOUSE GAS STRATEGY RENEWAL

Mr. Speaker, a significant priority of the 16th Assembly is an environment that will sustain present and future generations. Climate change remains a serious issue for the people of the Northwest Territories.

The warming of our climate as a result of the release of greenhouse gases has broad implications to our environment and the potential to impact the social, cultural and economic well being of NWT residents. Our government has taken broad action to support, investigate and implement initiatives to help residents, communities, industry and Government Departments reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and their reliance on imported fossil fuels.

These actions were laid out in the NWT Greenhouse Gas Strategy released in 2007.

The 2007 Strategy outlined 39 actions aimed at controlling greenhouse gas emissions and included the goal of reducing emissions from GNWT operations by 10 percent below 2001 levels, by 2011. Actions were shared between Environment and Natural Resources, the Arctic Energy Alliance and other Government Departments and agencies. Working with our partners, progress has been made on all 39 actions and we are on track to meet, or better, the GNWT emissions reduction target.

Mr. Speaker, it is now time to build upon this success. We must maintain the long term commitment to reduce our carbon footprint, to reduce our reliance on imported fossil fuels and to expand the use of alternative energy sources. To map the route forward to a low carbon future Environment and Natural Resources is leading an initiative to prepare a revised Greenhouse Gas Strategy for 2011 to 2015.

This Government is committed to broadening the application of greenhouse gas reduction measures on a territory-wide basis, which includes government, business, industry and communities. The Strategy will include a complete assessment of current activities and identify new actions we need to take to move forward in our efforts towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Based on this assessment the Strategy will set targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions across the NWT.

The preparation of a broad Strategy requires discussions and input from a range of stakeholders including other Departments, communities, residents, businesses, industry and Aboriginal governments.

We will be seeking input on the goals, objectives and principles that drive the Strategy, on how to improve existing actions so they work better for residents, communities, businesses and industry and on new actions we should be taking.

Initial input has already been obtained from the Joint Climate Change Committee, GNWT Departments and the Finance Roundtable.

Between now and February, meetings will be arranged across the NWT to coincide with meetings of regional and community boards and councils and business and industry associations. I will provide Standing Committee with an update on progress on these consultations in February. Once stakeholder input has been received, a draft Strategy will be developed and circulated for broad stakeholder and public review. It is our intention to have a revised Greenhouse Gas Strategy available for Executive Council and Standing Committee review in May 2011 and to release the revised Strategy by next summer.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of climate change and greenhouse gases is a complex issue requiring smart, efficient and affordable solutions to help protect our environment for future generations. It is important we continue to demonstrate to our residents and all Canadians that we are taking this threat seriously.

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