

Release of “*Creating A Brighter Future: A Review of Electricity Rates, Regulation and Subsidy Programs in the Northwest Territories*”

Mr. Speaker, later today I will be tabling the report of the Electricity Review Panel titled “*Creating A Brighter Future: A Review of Electricity Rates, Regulation and Subsidy Programs in the Northwest Territories*”, commonly referred to as the Electricity Review.

Mr. Speaker, nearly one year ago – on December 4, 2008 – I released a public discussion paper on behalf of the Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee that established the context for the Electricity Review and posed a number of questions for public discussion. The first question posed – and the one that provides the basis for all of the others - was “*What should be our vision for the future of electricity in the Northwest Territories?*”

To lead the public discussion, the Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee appointed a team of three distinguished members; Mark Cleveland, Gerry Forrest and Doug Matthews. The team was asked to approach their task with the following three objectives in mind:

- Reduce costs where possible;
- Distribute the costs equitably; and
- Ensure affordability.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that the Review Panel has undertaken an extensive public discussion process and by all reports, this process has been appreciated by our residents and communities. The team held public discussion meetings in Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife, Bechoko, Hay River, Fort Smith and Fort Resolution. The team also worked with the Northwest Territories Association of Communities to hold a two day work shop for our smaller communities to ensure their input was considered. In total, the panel heard from over 350 residents.

In July 2009 a report on the public discussions was released, entitled "*Electricity Review: A Discussion with Northerners About Electricity*". The public discussions, as well as a number of written submissions to the Review Team, are reflected in this report.

With the release of *Creating a Brighter Future* the Review Team has presented the Government of the Northwest Territories with a series of comprehensive recommendations. Mr. Speaker, the recommendations contained in the report are solely those of the Review Team. The Report that will be tabled today is the report that was submitted by the Review Team, in its entirety.

Mr. Speaker, the next step will be to develop a Government of the Northwest Territories response to the Review Team's report. We have had extensive discussions with all members of this Legislative Assembly over the past two weeks and the regular Members, through the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning, have agreed to work closely with the Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee in the development of a GNWT response. We have all agreed that this response must be comprehensive and will need to reflect the results of the Review of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation as well as the review of the ATCO Proposal, which we have discussed a number of times in this Assembly.

Developing a comprehensive response will be a complex task and will take some time. Most importantly Mr. Speaker, we have the potential to undertake some fundamental change to our electricity system – change that has been called for by our residents, our communities, and by Members of this Legislative Assembly. It is important that we take the time to get it right.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee, working closely with the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning, will develop a comprehensive response to the Electricity Review, incorporating the Northwest Territories Power Corporation

Review and the ATCO Proposal by March 2010. We believe we have a real opportunity here to establish a long term vision for the future of our electricity system – a vision that will ensure the sustainability of all of our communities and a vision that future generations will be proud of.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.