



MR. HERBERT NAKIMAYAK  
MLA, NUNAKPUT

OCT 18 2017

**Oral Question 859-18(2) Support for Traditional Harvesters**

This letter is further to commitments made in the Legislative Assembly on September 22, 2017 regarding Support for Traditional Harvesters. During our discussion, you had asked the following questions:

1. Has the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) investigated the viability of a tannery in the Beaufort Delta Region (BDR) recently, and when was the last time this idea was explored?
2. Will ITI look at the idea of home tanning kits for Nunakput and other remote communities in the Northwest Territories (NWT)?
3. What is ITI doing to assist harvesters who want access to tanning options?

I have followed-up with ITI in regards to the possibility and viability of providing home tanning kits to Nunakput and other remote communities in the NWT and offer the following information:

In the past, ITI did explore various tanning models that could possibly be viable in the BDR and other small remote communities in the NWT. Even though an extensive business case was not carried out, it did not appear to be a worthy or economic initiative. This was primarily due to the capital and operational costs associated for further investigation, as well as the uncertain uptake given the support that is already being offered by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources under its Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur (GMVF) Program. In respect to GMVF, I would be remiss in not pointing out that fur being shipped to the auction house from any location must be in a raw (green) state and not tanned in order to realize best returns for the trapper.

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Further to this preliminary investigation, ITI's North Slave Regional Office held tanning workshops; however, they were unsuccessful due to the very nature of the labor intensive process involved in tanning.

Home tanning kits are typically developed for specific hides and pelts, there is not a one size tanning kit that fits all pelts and/or hides; although they are still commercially available on the market, some do work, but many do not.

In addition to commercial tanneries being very costly and labor intensive, trappers would also require a large volume of skins to make it worthwhile to bring their fur and pelts to market. The demand for products would far outweigh the annual volume of fur produced across the NWT. While this initiative may be good in theory, tanneries need steady, consistent volumes of skins going through the plant to be feasible and successful in the NWT, which has already demonstrated through ITI's past explorations not to be the case.

When considering these types of initiatives, ITI needs to be aware of the impact this would have on the environment in the sense that commercial tanneries use toxic substances, which need to be handled, transported and disposed of in a manner that is environmentally safe and secure, and in doing this, the transportation costs would be significant.

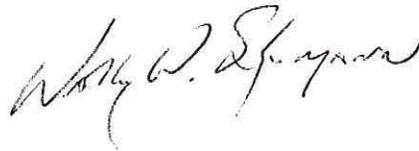
This being said, Traditional Harvesters who are looking for financial support to obtain home tanning kits can apply to ITI Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development Policy under the Micro Business initiative located on ITI's website at the following link: <http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/en/services/micro-business-seed>. Application forms can also be accessed on ITI's website located at: [http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/sites/www.iti.gov.nt.ca/files/seed\\_application\\_english\\_30.pdf](http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/sites/www.iti.gov.nt.ca/files/seed_application_english_30.pdf). The traditional harvester is encouraged to contact their local ITI Economic Development Officer for assistance to start the process.

Furthermore, I also committed to share with you the results of whether a tannery in ITI's South Slave Region would be a viable option.

Currently, ITI's South Slave Regional Office is working with the Fort Providence Dene Band to develop a tannery within the community. The initial phase of the proposed tannery will see moose hides tanned using traditional methods. The second phase will look at small fur bearers such as, muskrat and beaver hides.

The intent of the tannery is to market primarily to artists in the NWT, where demand for these products is high, and to also provide a traditional product to the artist for their use. It is anticipated the tannery will be in production by summer 2018. I would be pleased to meet with you to further discuss the tannery and to share any results as we learn of them.

Thank you for your interest in this matter. I trust this response addresses your questions.



Wally Schumann  
Minister  
Industry, Tourism and Investment

c. Honourable Robert C. McLeod  
Minister, ENR

Mr. Tim Mercer  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Tom Jensen, Deputy Minister  
Industry, Tourism and Investment

Mr. David Hastings  
Legislative Coordinator