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February 7, 2018

Standing Committee on Government Operations
Legislative Assembly
PO Box 1320
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9

Dear Members of the Standing Committee on Government Operations,

Re: Bill 1 – Western Canada Lottery Act

Thank you for holding public hearings on the new *Bill 1, Western Canada Lottery Act*. This important legislation establishes the Northwest Territories Lottery Commission, establishing greater independence for lottery operations and funds in the NWT, and creates a Physical Activity, Sport and Recreation Fund to receive lottery proceeds.

The legislation appears to codify the current arrangement that dedicates all lottery funds to sports organizations; however, the legislation also fails to define physical activity, sport or recreation programs actually are. Over the years there has been public discussion on and off about expanding the eligibility of lottery funds to non-sports programs to include arts programs and this is the right time to consider this change. Opening the lottery fund for more broad application in the territory is reasonable step that mirrors other Canadian jurisdictions, such as Alberta, that have a more open access lottery fund.

While it is possible that arts programs could fit under the legislations undefined concept of 'recreation' programs, I recommend that committee bring forward amendments to the legislation to broaden the scope of the lottery fund and further generalize the name of the fund.

Finally, the proposed legislation does not require any specific openness or transparency for the newly established lottery fund. The legislation should be amended to require that any disbursements from the fund be publically disclosed. The disclosure should include the date of the funding grant, the recipient organization, the amount and purpose of the funding. These disclosures should be made, at least, quarterly, and published online in an accessible, open format.

While establishing this separate lottery fund is an important step in the growth of the NWT's approach to lottery funding, it is important that it is done openly and transparently.

Regards,



David Wasylciw

CC: Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs