

Housing Actions in the Tłıchǝ Region

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation has been working collaboratively with the Tłıchǝ Government to address critical housing issues in the Tłıchǝ Region. In order to meet this Government's commitments to address the cost of living, the Housing Corporation is continuing to implement northern solutions for northern housing. A crucial element of this approach is working in partnership with other orders of government, such as the Tłıchǝ to address affordable housing challenges.

Mr. Speaker, the Tłıchǝ Government and the Government of the Northwest Territories formed a working group involving leadership from all Tłıchǝ communities, as well as senior management from the Housing Corporation. The group has met a number of times over the past year leading to improved planning and an acceleration of housing activities.

The group has identified and prioritized areas that would benefit from an increased focus including: repairs and maintenance, analyzing the existing housing stock, finding solutions to homelessness, avoiding evictions, building capacity and improved communications with residents of the Tłıchǝ Region.

I am encouraged by the recent work that has been undertaken by the Tłıchǝ Government and the Government of the Northwest Territories Housing Working Group. I look forward to the reporting on the actions that they will take in these areas.

I want to promote the work that is already being done by the Housing Corporation to address many of these issues. One of these actions is the introduction of a Housing Stability Worker in Behchokǝ. This person will work towards supporting residents in developing strategies to keep their housing.

Sometimes the obligations related to housing can be lost in the demand to address other pressing issues such as addictions, child care, family violence, poor health and other social issues.

The Housing Stability Worker will work with vulnerable tenants by connecting them to vital community programs and services. This support approach will hopefully lead to more stable tenancies. This program is up and running in Behchokò right now with an office set up at the Tłı̨chų's Ko Go Cho Complex.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also let this House know the Northern Pathways to Housing program is expected to be completed in Behchokò in the near future. This project is designed to help address homelessness. Once finished, it will house four single adults who would have otherwise been experiencing homelessness. This project has already shown to be successful so far in Fort Simpson where four previously homeless individuals have been stably housed for nearly half a year. Mr. Speaker, this project is truly an example of a northern solution for northern housing. At the inception of its design, there were no projects like it anywhere in the country.

Mr. Speaker, the Northern Pathways program is intended to house people first and then to improve their housing sustainability by addressing the issues that contributed to their homelessness. This approach is indicative of how our government is looking for ways to deliver services in a more integrated manner.

In support of our elders remaining in their home communities, the Housing Corporation recently constructed a seniors' aging-in-place nine-plex in Whatì. This facility was toured by Federal Deputy Ministers just the other day and showcases the innovative approaches that the Northwest Territories is taking to address our issues. I am hopeful that this important infrastructure will result in more seniors staying in Whatì and continuing to pass on their wisdom to future generations.

Lastly, the Housing Corporation has begun preliminary discussions with the Tłıchǵ towards the development of four community housing plans for their region. Each individual community plan will feed into a larger regional plan. These housing plans will be developed by the community for the community. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation will look to hire a local facilitator to gather local feedback and to help plan for a community housing forum. At the end of the process, communities will have a detailed, comprehensive community profile, a needs analysis and a housing plan.

These plans will be invaluable going forward for all housing stakeholders. They could be utilized for planning for new infrastructure, partnership proposals for any level of government, supporting private market proponents in their projects, housing design, and numerous other housing planning purposes.

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation has presented this concept to the Tłıchǵ Government and the Government of the Northwest Territories Working Group and will be working with Tłıchǵ representatives towards the development of these plans over the next year. My understanding is that at least one community housing plan will be initiated in the Tłıchǵ Region in the coming weeks upon formal approval of the community's leadership.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that there are considerable housing challenges in our small communities. We all know that there are considerable housing challenges in Whatì, Behchokò, Wekweètì and Gamètì. Tackling these issues head on together is what's required. I know that the Tłıchǵ leadership appreciates the efforts of the Tłıchǵ Government and the Government of the Northwest Territories Housing Working Group. Joining forces with the Tłıchǵ Government will provide more leverage to our efforts. I look forward to improved housing outcomes as we work together towards shared housing aspirations for our people.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.