

KATRINA NOKLEBY

FOR **MLA GREAT SLAVE**



Thank you to the NWT & NU Chamber of Mines and NWT Chamber of Commerce for the opportunity to participate in the forum and respond to these questions.

- 1) The NWT Chamber of Commerce will be hosting Opportunities North this October which highlights key ways to grow the economy. Recent reports from the Conference Bureau of Canada and most recently CMHC pointed towards an economic slump. If you had the opportunity what would be your direct and specific action to grow the economy?**

With the diamond mines set to close in the next decade we need to expand the life of the existing mines while stimulating our exploration sector through key infrastructure projects such as the Mackenzie Valley Highway, the Slave Geologic Road, and the Talston expansion. We need to leverage the Giant Mine Remediation Project to build Indigenous businesses in the emerging reclamation and remediation fields to provide transferrable skills to locals and northerners. This will also ensure that dollars spent cleaning up existing mines remain in the north while we wait for the exploration sector to rebound. Expansion of our all-weather road system and green energy projects would inject money into the NWT construction sector as well as reduce the cost of doing business in the NWT.

A Polytechnic University would be a great way to attract new people to the territory. We have amazing talent in the NWT and could become a world class leader in climate change and permafrost research. Upon graduation it's likely many of these students would stay in the territory and continue with their research and work, increasing the number of transfer payments from the federal government. Students from the University would be a potential labour pool to work lower paying, service sector jobs that are currently experiencing a staffing shortage.

At the same time, we need to start building a parallel, sustainable economy for the children of the Northwest Territories and future generations. We must improve the efficiency with how we operate the government and solicit feedback from end-users and experts when making decisions that affect their lives and work. We need to increase investor certainty by settling land claims and increasing the cohesiveness of our government. We also need to build local capacity and employment through the utilization of successful Indigenous businesses such as Det'on Cho Corporation, Denesoline, and the Tlicho Group of Companies.

Katrina Nokleby for MLA Great Slave

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- 2) Investment in mineral exploration is critical to maintaining the NWT's minerals industry and the NWT's economy, which is important in the NWT's path forward post Devolution. It has been more than three Legislative Assembly terms since exploration investment in the NWT began to decline. It still hasn't recovered, preferring other territories and provinces instead. The Conference Board of Canada continues to predict grim economic consequences for the NWT as a result of mining decline. What specific actions would you take to turn this around, to rejuvenate mining investment in the NWT and keep our mining jobs, business, and tax revenues strong?

Mining is over 30% of our GDP and with the diamond mines set to close within the decade we need to act now to stimulate exploration. When speaking with exploration companies I hear mining companies are not interested in the NWT because they have sustainability mandates for their mines to be powered with cleaner energy. When all we have to offer is diesel operations, exploration companies can't sell their finds. We must remember we are competing for mining dollars in a global economy and must make investment here enticing.

The factors I believe are key to a revitalizing our mining industry are:

- a. The construction of infrastructure, as the cost of power and production in the north is prohibitive. We need to expand our all-weather road system to reduce climate uncertainty on our transportation systems and implement affordable green energy solutions. We should work towards creating all-weather roads to market including accessing future ports in Nunavut.
- b. We must continue to refresh our regulatory system. We have one of the strongest regulatory regimes in the world however regular reviews should be conducted to ensure we're staying current and to reduce any unnecessary barriers to staying competitive in the global market.
- c. We need to reduce uncertainty in the territory. Instability or lack of cohesion within the GNWT can cause us to lose out on federal funding while unsettled land claims prevent Indigenous groups from being full participants at the table. This makes investors hesitant to do business in the NWT.

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- 3) The second stated priority for the 18th Legislative Assembly was cost of living. During the time of the 18th Legislative Assembly northerners have increasingly had their cost of living increased through the introduction of or increase of new fees and/or taxes. To name a few NTPC has increased rates an average of 31% over the last 5 years.; the airport improvement fee; increase in land lease taxes; and introduction of the carbon tax. How do you propose to noticeably reduce the cost of living in your riding?

We need to work on building our economy and implementing more efficient energy systems so that we can reduce the cost of living and power for citizens. We should increase funding for greenhouses, agriculture, and country food programs to deal with food security issues. We should also incentivize home ownership by offering grants or subsidies to first time homeowners and increase funding to organizations such as Arctic Energy Alliance that aid homeowners in retrofitting their homes to operate more efficiently.

The riding of Great Slave has a number of low-income residents who are hit particularly hard by the higher cost of living in the NWT. Many of these residents are new immigrants to Canada who likely face language and other barriers when trying to obtain higher paying jobs. I would support increased funding to programs that aid people new to Canada, and other low-income workers, in obtaining the skills necessary to be successful.

As I speak with more residents of Great Slave, I realize that the prohibitive cost of daycare is a huge issue in my riding. I would be in support of further daycare subsidies for low-income families as well as exploring the possibility of increasing daycare spaces in Yellowknife.

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