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November 08, 2019

Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce
4921 49th St
Yellowknife, NT X1A 0A2

RE: Vote Growth

The NWT Chamber of Commerce would like to provide our support to the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce's Vote Growth election platform that was put forth during the territorial election in September of this year.

In Vote Growth the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce highlighted 4 election issues that was top of mind for their membership and for the most part correlated with the NWT Chamber's elections issues and advocacy issues during the 18th Legislative Assembly.

Issue 1. Liquor Licensing & Regulations:

As indicated in our election forum questionnaire the top 5 issues were Red Tape/Barriers to Entry; Cost of Living; Over Regulation; Mineral Industry and Housing and the regulations/red tape faced by businesses in regards to liquor licensing & regulations come up again and again. The biggest issues being allowing minors in Class A establishment and the process of obtaining a liquor license. In order to stay pace with the rest of Canada as well as to better serve our residents and tourists we need to consider allowing minors into Class A establishments during a set period of times (ie until 8pm). This is a practice that has been put in place in a majority of provinces as well as Yukon. This is a revenue win for both businesses as well as the GNWT. We can even take it another step by allowing all festivals to be licensed such as they have in BC. This eliminates beer gardens which have proven to create a more family friendly environment; the reduction of alcohol related incidents as well as a reduction of over drinking. Though the revenues from alcohol sale reduces the revenue from ticket sales as well as sales at booths sharply increases.

We are happy to see the positive trend that has been in place since the new Chair has taken over where no new licensing request has been denied in the last 2 years and hope that this trend continues and the licensing board continues to work with establishments to further streamline this process.

The issue/decision of Class A establishments now having to purchase their inventory directly from the liquor shop needs to be reviewed. We are aware that this falls outside of the Board's control and is done through the Commission, but still needs to be addressed as this has become an unnecessary barrier to entry for existing and new businesses.

Finally, in regards to appealing decisions this goes back to continuing to work with existing and new businesses to make all regulatory processes more streamline and easier to access without creating another level of bureaucracy.



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Issue 2. Fiber Redundancy:

The NWT had experienced over 18 widespread internet outages longer than 4 hours since July causing businesses over \$10m lost revenues. Not to mention the NWT are paying close to double for a basic internet package than they would in the southern provinces, with slower speeds as low as 2.3 Mbps downloads and 0.4 Mbps uploads. The NWT Chamber supports both the Yellowknife Chamber and our mutual member Northwestel in the asks in the Vote Growth platform as well as supporting Northwestel's work to bring fiber redundancy to the NWT through a fiber optic line under the Great Slave Lake

Issue 3. Community Government Underfunding

The NWT Chamber supports the recommendations set forth in the Yellowknife Chamber's Vote Growth platform to alleviate the issues being cause at a municipal level due to the continuous underfunding of community governments. The NWT Chamber has pledged our support to the NWT Association of Communities to have this situation resolved in a timely manner. Currently the community governments are being underfunded by almost \$40m/annually. This is causing the need for exuberant property tax increases in communities which deters they ability to run a profitable business. Once those businesses and residents move out of the NWT we not only lose the transfer payments for each resident that leaves but also the tax revenue that would have been generated both personally and commercially. All communities in the NT are now facing tough choices when having to pay for infrastructure needs that have not been properly maintained due to the year over lack of funding.

[Community-Funding-Report-2015.pdf](#)

Issue 4. Post-Secondary Transformation:

The NWT Chamber of Commerce is in support of the transformation of Aurora College and their campuses into a Polytechnique University. As the NWT Chamber we are not in support of any community losing any jobs due to this transformation. The NWT Chamber does not support the relocation of the head office from Fort Smith to Yellowknife and support the previous agreement by the 3 Mayors (Mayor Napier-Buckley; Mayor Alty and Mayor Kulikowski) of the location of the Aurora College head office remaining in Fort Smith.

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Issue 5. Transfer of commissioners Land to the City of Yellowknife:

The NWT Chamber is in support of this issue and have previously advocated along with the Fort Simpson Chamber a similar request to Minister Sebert:

[Leased Land vs Titled Land.pdf](#)

By transferring all commissioners land to each community within their municipal boundaries we are opening up the opportunity to create several different economies such as trades; tourism; real estate; to name a few) as well increase the amount of property taxes that will be able to be collected by the communities which will help improve the social and municipal offering that they can provide to their residents.

As per Minister Sebert's response this would affect land claim negotiations which is false as all property within municipal boundaries have been removed from all claims as well as per the 2015 federal budget financial institutions can not finance properties on commissioners' land, there is no work around this federal regulation.

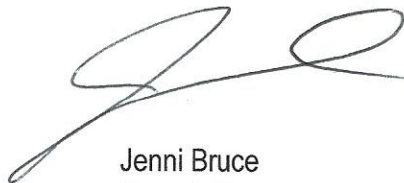
[Minister Sebert Response.pdf](#)

The NWT Chamber looks forward to supporting the Yellowknife Chamber and the 19th Legislative Assembly in stabilizing and growing the economy of the NWT over the next 4 years.

Regards,



Renée Comeau
Executive Director
NWT Chamber of Commerce



Jenni Bruce
President
NWT Chamber of Commerce

CC: Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Premier; Hon. Katrina Nokleby, Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment; Hon Paulie Chinna, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs; Hon Shane Thompson, Minister of Lands; Hon Caroline Wawzonek, Minister of Finance; Deneen Everett, Executive Director of Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce, Kyle Thomas, President Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce