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Honourable Julie Green
Minister of Health and Social Services
PO Box 1320, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2L9

September 23, 2021

Re: Temporary Day Shelter at 4709 Franklin Avenue

Dear Minister Green,

We are disappointed and frustrated with your recent open letter regarding the location of a temporary shelter at 4709 Franklin Avenue. Your language makes clear that you intend on vilifying any opposition to your decision. Business owners have valid objections to your decision and they deserve to be heard; this is why the appeals process exists. You should not seek to undermine that process. Your rhetoric is an ugly attempt to drive a wedge between business owners and the well-meaning residents of Yellowknife. This is a thinly veiled ploy to mute business owners' legitimate concerns through fear of public shaming and retribution from consumers in hopes of distracting from your planning failures. This is unacceptable.

Other options for the temporary day shelter exist, but they require investment that this government has refused to provide. Promising to start construction of a new facility in 2024 gives the lie to your assertion that this is a priority for your government. Instead, you have chosen to pass on the responsibility of a permanent solution over to the next government and place the short-term burden disproportionately on downtown business owners, many of whom are already struggling as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yellowknife's homeless and street-involved population deserve attention and a compassionate solution to meet their needs. Yellowknife businesses deserve better communications and fair consultation and engagement. Our community deserves government investment that prioritizes this act of reconciliation in a way that meets the needs of the vulnerable population in Yellowknife while mitigating the impacts on downtown businesses.

Yellowknife businesses continue to be willing to work with the Government of the Northwest Territories on a solution that will strengthen our community as a whole.

Regards,

Tim Syer, President
Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce

Deneen Everett, Executive Director
Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce

