

Greenhouse Gas Strategy

Hon. Michael McLeod

Friday, March 14, 2007

Statement to the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Speaker, later today I will be tabling the revised Northwest Territories Greenhouse Gas Strategy.

In 2005, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources undertook a stakeholder review of the previous Greenhouse Gas Strategy, released in 2001. This review revealed the existing Strategy was on the right track and represented a good start towards managing greenhouse gas emissions. It also identified shortcomings, including a lack of emission reduction targets, the absence of an implementation plan, insufficient funding and a general lack of accountability for results.

The revised Strategy remedies these shortcomings. Meeting climate change and greenhouse gas emissions head-on requires action, and that action is captured in this revised Strategy.

The Strategy commits the GNWT to lead through example by adopting a greenhouse gas emission reduction target of 10 percent below 2001 levels by the year 2011 in our own operations.

This will be accomplished by actions such as testing and purchasing hybrid vehicles, increasing energy performance in government buildings and developing a new green procurement policy for the Government of the Northwest Territories.

There are also actions to reduce emissions in the community and residential sectors and in the commercial and industrial sector that have been incorporated into the revised Strategy.

This revised Strategy will also place a much greater emphasis on the need to respond to the impacts of climate change. Following implementation of the revised Greenhouse Gas Strategy, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources will begin to develop a climate change impacts and adaptation plan.

And finally Mr. Speaker, the revised Greenhouse House Strategy commits the department to undertake a further review of the Strategy in 2010 with the objective of establishing longer-term targets beyond 2011.

Between the Greenhouse Gas Strategy and the Energy Plan, I am confident our government will strike the right balance between meeting the energy needs of our residents and industry and the need to protect the environment.

Mr. Speaker, I want to stress that the time for change is now. There is a saying that goes "Think globally. Act locally". I ask the people of the Northwest Territories to start "acting locally" by making at least one small change to reduce their own personal greenhouse gas emissions. It can be as simple as not idling our vehicles or lowering the thermostat in our homes by one or two degrees. Big changes can begin with these small actions.

I invite Members of this Legislative Assembly and the public to join Minister Bell and myself in the Great Hall later this afternoon for a Press Conference, following the tabling of the Energy Plan and Greenhouse Gas Strategy.

Mahsi cho.