

Canadian Council of Environment Ministers Meeting

Hon. J. Michael Miltenberger

February 19, 2009

Statement to the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to update Members on the Canadian Council of Environment Ministers Meeting held in Whitehorse earlier this week. I attended this conference along with the Member from Weledeh, Mr. Bob Bromley.

A range of issues were discussed at the meeting including municipal waste water effluent, climate change and strategies to reduce packaging and encourage manufacturers to take greater responsibility for the products they manufacture.

I am pleased to advise this House that after six years in development, the majority of CCME members endorsed national standards for municipal waste water effluent. In addition, and despite the range of different views and approaches to deal with climate change, all Environment Ministers supported finding common areas of interest so we can work together on this important issue.

Ministers also endorsed the Canada-wide Strategy for the Management of Waste Water Effluent and the framework to manage discharges from waste water facilities in Canada. We also received updates on the development of a new comprehensive air quality management system for Canada which focuses on national standards as well plans for a study on water conservation and scarcity in the context of climate change.

Members will also be pleased to hear that there was agreement to start national consultations on action plans to reduce packaging and other waste and to develop a comprehensive standard on packaging.

Another important step was made in that the Ministers agreed on the need to develop a strategic national vision on water and priority setting to further guide jurisdictions in their water management. This is a significant development for the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, while in Whitehorse I was able to meet with my colleagues from the Yukon and Nunavut to discuss issues of common concern.

There was strong support for all three northern territories to work together on a number of pressing environmental issues including climate change, water and wildlife management, particularly caribou and polar bear management.

We also agreed to share information on alternative energy technologies and ways to reduce our dependence of fossil fuels. Our senior officials will now develop a formal process for us to move forward on these important issues. Mahsi cho.