

MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

'LOVE NWT WATER' BOTTLED WATER CAMPAIGN

February 16, 2017

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to challenge all Members and all NWT citizens to take the Love NWT Water pledge and swear off bottled water for the coming year, and ideally, forever.

Love NWT Water is the promotional campaign recently launched by Ecology North, a northern environmental NGO, to encourage Northwest Territories residents to turn on their taps and stop buying bottled water.

According to Ecology North's research, 24 bottled water retailers sold more than 1.8 million liters of bottled water here in the NWT between 2014 and 2015. Those bottles are shipped from southern suppliers with all the negative environmental costs of greenhouse gas production resulting from the manufacturing of containers, processing of water, trucking, and the cost of handling the waste containers. About 200,000 bottles ended up in the landfill. It is not cheap; flats of bottled water can cost \$20 and more if they are flown into communities off the road system. All this to replace a product that is available only steps away, in our taps.

This government transfers tens of millions of dollars to our municipal governments for the construction and operation of 29 water treatment plants serving our 33 communities. We mount training programs for plant operators while Health and Social Services conducts regular tests to ensure drinking water quality regulations are met. As the organization representing the 33 municipal governments in the Northwest Territories, the NWT Association of Communities has a standing resolution calling for municipal governments not to use bottled water.

So let's get with it. Our territorially funded municipal governments produce some of the finest drinking water in the world. If this government doesn't show its faith in the quality of that water, who will? We need to make our territorial offices bottled-water-free, starting with the executive offices here in this building, and challenge our municipal partner governments to do the same.

I am urging all Members here and citizens across the territory to take the pledge, drop the cost of bottled water, reduce their environmental footprint, and drink from the best municipal water supplies in the world. Go to #loveNWTwater to take the pledge. I will have questions for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.