

**JULIE GREEN—MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE**  
**Safe House Pilot Project**  
**Committee of the Whole—2018-2019 Operating Budget Review**  
**Dept. of Health and Social Services—February 28, 2018**

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, when the standing committee reviewed the business plan, we made a recommendation that the department look at developing a safe house pilot project so that communities that don't have family violence shelters, which is most of the communities in the NWT, would have a place that women and children, primarily women and children, could flee in the event that they needed to for their safety. I'm wondering if the Minister has given any consideration to developing this idea along with the NWT Housing Corporation? We thought that it could be dual-purpose; it could provide shelter for family violence and emergency homelessness. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We've have some conversations between the Minister and me about whether or not there are houses available, and other things, but we haven't really fleshed anything out, and we don't really know what's available. I'm prepared to have more conversations with the Minister as well as committee, but when it comes to this particular area, my first priority is to get a formula developed for the shelters to make sure that we are getting the money that we need to the shelters and getting that stabilized first. That doesn't mean that I don't hear the Member. It doesn't mean that I don't think there's value in what the Member is saying. I'm just setting some priorities, but I am prepared to have more conversations with the Minister to explore the concept, to see what is possible. I think it's important to have more conversations with committee on this one, and get some more creative solutions around this, because there is certainly some need out there. If we could use it for multiple purposes, that might be the best way to go.

So nothing significant, other than a few additional discussions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So what I hear is that this is a discussion point. I guess what I want to say is I appreciate that your priority is the formula, but I want to say that my priority is the safety of the women who live in the 11 communities that don't have police and they don't have shelters. Like, they are really in a stuck place when it comes to protecting themselves from a violent partner. So I really encourage him to keep talking with the Housing Minister and with the standing committee about a pilot program to see whether there is some possibility here for us to provide safety to women in communities where they don't have it, either through the police or through a family violence shelter. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I hear the Member. I guess, to be clear, the formula we are working on together with the existing shelters isn't just a

monetary thing. It is a service-level discussion, as well. Recognizing that right now, where shelters don't exist, there is money to bring people in. We need to make sure that those mechanisms exist. That doesn't mean we shouldn't explore what the Member is talking about.

We need to make sure we have these service levels understood so that we are getting as much for the money that we have. Then I think we will be in a better position once we have some service levels determined to reach out and figure out how we can pilot some of these things, because it still needs to be based on something. It still needs to be based on a structure. Ideas are great, but they have to be fleshed out. I hear the Member. I am just a little nervous about running out and doing a pilot until we have a service-level agreement in place that we can build upon, if that makes sense. Thank you, Mr. Chair.