

MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

CARBON PRICING

November 1, 2018

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of carbon pricing and how to encourage reduced use of fossil fuels takes up a lot of space in our national debate and, of course, it's a popular topic in this House, as well. These are vital issues for many reasons. I would like to give my assessment of where we are at in the NWT and where we need to go.

Cabinet announced details in July of a scheme that would meet the federal requirements of a carbon tax. Cabinet said its made-in-the-NWT framework takes into account our cost of living by establishing a system of immediate tax exemptions and cost of living rebates. To offset increased costs, the GNWT created a cost of living offset to refund the tax to individuals and families.

I had hoped for a more comprehensive package of measures, including dramatic increases in rebates and incentives to improve the energy efficiency of homes and buildings. Increases to energy alliance programs have come thanks to new federal dollars. I applaud the GNWT's announcement this week of an additional \$1.8 million under the new Government Greenhouse Gas Grant Program. That is progress, but we need much more ambitious supports.

I am also convinced industry is willing to meet the low carbon challenge. The Canadian Mining Association is on the record in support of "a broad-based carbon price that is applicable to all sectors of the Canadian economy." One of our mines took action more than a decade ago with a big investment in wind power generation because this makes economic sense. I believe the industry is willing to do more to meet shareholder demands that they take action on greenhouse gas emissions. As to the notion that carbon pricing is a job killer and stunts economic growth, the facts soundly refute this misconception.

When I lend an ear to this issue in the NWT, I am not hearing the public outcry about a carbon tax. I believe our residents have the learned and factual warnings of the extraordinary hardships facing our planet as a result of climate change, and they are willing to act. What is needed is inspirational leadership, not fearful hesitancy. For the sake of our children's future, we must keep our international promises and work towards a lower carbon future. I will be asking our government how they can better support our response to climate change. Mahsi.