



July 9, 2020

Ms. Jenni Bruce
NWT Chamber of Commerce
jbruce@rentmidwest.com

Mr. Paul Gruner
Det'on Cho Management LP
paul@detoncho.com

Dear Ms. Bruce and Mr. Gruner:

Regular Update and Recommendations from the Business Advisory Council

I would like to commend the Business Advisory Council (BAC) for the immediacy with which you have begun your work and the number of times with which you have already met.

Your ability to mobilize has, admittedly, exceeded our ability to be immediately responsive.

Further, the scope of your initial recommendations were broad and have necessitated that our government establish new processes and protocols to coordinate a response and address recommendations that lie outside of the mandate and responsibilities of my office. As you are aware we are working to stand up the other two councils as well as a joint Cabinet-MLA committee. Once these are in place we will have a clear process for discussion of all recommendations.

Recognizing your desire for more immediate and forthcoming responses, and further to my letter of June 30, 2020, I would like to offer the following initial updates on initiatives relating to the recommendations included in your correspondence of June 14, 2020.

The following recommendations are received and acknowledged:

1. Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) employees should return to work as quickly as possible.
2. Increase communication and resources to businesses on reopening plan. Reallocate resources to focus on providing on-site assistance and direction vs. enforcement and threats of fines.
3. Open the borders through a regional plan that focuses on the needs and capacities of the individual communities.
4. Release of economic data to public.

.../2

GNWT employees should return to work as quickly as possible.

Like all workplaces in the Northwest Territories (NWT), our government is working to address the conditions that will allow our employees to return to, and be safe, in their work environment while the threat of COVID-19 still exists.

As one of the territory's largest employers, we agree that it is important that we provide this example to the business community. However, the enormity of our workforce and our dependence on communal office environments means that it is taking a little longer to fully meet the expanded risk management and safety protocols required by the Chief Public Health Officer (CPHO).

In the coming weeks, you will see an increase in the number of GNWT employees returning to their workplace. They will not all return at once. Instead, our return to work will be phased with an immediate focus on returning those employees who deliver resident and client-facing services that have been interrupted or impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Increase communication and resources to businesses on reopening plan. Reallocate resources to focus on providing on-site assistance and direction vs. enforcement and threats of fines.

We acknowledge the difficulties encountered by business owners who were seeking information regarding Phase II of our government's Emerging Wisely plan. I can confirm that we are taking immediate steps to improve the efficiency and timeliness of the Protect NWT unit. This includes providing more resources to improve business processes and ensuring better response times to the rising number of questions and requests for information that we are receiving.

As we further adapt to our new reality, we are looking at what we can do to create a more permanent corporate structure for our government that addresses the risks and impacts of COVID-19.

Our objective is to provide the clear, more-responsive, coordinated, and balanced approach that we will need, and that you are requesting, regarding our work and planning to Emerge Stronger.

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) is further committed to scheduling information sessions for the BAC to facilitate the flow of information to members' respective organizations.

.../3

Arrangements have been made for the BAC to meet with the CPHO on July 9, 2020 and it is our intent to have further sessions with the BAC and Cabinet. These meetings will be held to discuss concerns and get a better understanding of the GNWT's plans and what can be done to help restart the NWT economy.

Open the borders through a regional plan that focuses on the needs and capacities of the individual communities.

Restrictions on travel inside the NWT are a necessary measure implemented to protect public health and to limit the spread of COVID-19 to our communities. We will maintain these restrictions as long as they are needed to keep our people and communities safe.

That said, one of the roles that we envisioned for the BAC is to identify and advance creative or alternate solutions to the challenges that we are facing.

As we have implemented Phase II of the Emerging Wisely plan, the CPHO has proven itself to be flexible and considerate of thoughtful and measured proposals. I believe there is room for the BAC to leverage its position to present ideas and alternate solutions as implied by this recommendation that may benefit all or portions of its membership.

For my part, I will be happy to facilitate the presentation of such proposals to my colleagues. This positive, collaborative, and mutually beneficial approach was what was envisioned in the Terms of Reference proposed and adopted by this Committee.

Release of economic data to public.

Our work as a government has included gathering and compiling data to help us understand the impact that COVID-19 having on NWT businesses and our economy, and to help prioritize and focus needed supports for economic recovery.

The results of individual surveys have been presented and made available at many of our decision-making tables and meetings including to the BAC.

In the interest of advancing public awareness and discussions that will help to further define and chart a course for our economic recovery, we will soon release a summary of the interpretations and conclusions that we have realized from these surveys.

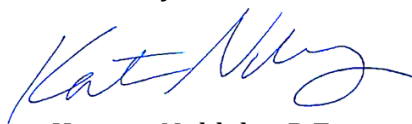
When we do, I commit to also making the survey data publically available on the Department of ITI's website.

.../4

Like it has globally, COVID-19 has impacted almost every aspect of our life in the North and we are acutely aware of the challenges and extreme impacts that are being faced by our territory's business community.

While we recognize the frustrations that exist, we remain committed to the approach envisioned by the creation of the BAC. I look forward to our ongoing discussions and your future recommendations as we work together towards economic recovery for the NWT.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Katrina Nokleby', written in a cursive style.

Katrina Nokleby, P.Eng.
Minister
Industry, Tourism and Investment

c. Cabinet Ministers

Ms. Shaleen Woodward
Principal Secretary

Mr. Martin Goldney
Secretary to Cabinet/Deputy Minister to Executive and Indigenous Affairs

Ms. Pamela Strand
Deputy Minister
Industry, Tourism and Investment