



Highways and Public Works
PO Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

February 20, 2019

Stacey Hassard, Chair
Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Re: Status update to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts – February 6, 2019

Dear Mr. Hassard:

Please find below a status update requested by the committee to inform the report being prepared following the public hearing on the *Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Yukon Legislative Assembly – 2017: Climate Change in Yukon* which was held on February 14, 2018.

1. Differentiating between targets and commitments

Included in the suite of actions to help achieve the objectives in the new climate change, energy and green economy strategy will be targets and commitments. While these actions (which may be referred to as commitments) are still under development, it is still anticipated that they will be defined through setting clear milestones and completion dates, and accompanied by anticipated levels of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) reductions, where appropriate.

In addition, targets will be established as a tool to complement the work used to track emissions and report on performance.

2. Timelines for departmental commitments

As one of the partners in the development of the new climate change, energy and green economy strategy, Yukon government is working across its departments to identify departmental commitments. Timelines for these commitments will follow the development of the strategy. A draft of the new climate change, energy and green economy strategy is anticipated for public review in late 2019.

Highways and Public Works is developing actions to support the goals of the new climate change, energy and green economy strategy that will include:

- Reducing the energy footprint of Yukon government buildings through building standards for new construction, efficiency upgrades of existing buildings, more efficient use of space and increasing our use of biomass and other renewable or lower greenhouse gas energy sources.
- Addressing the impacts of climate change by continuing to assess and monitor existing buildings located on permafrost, ensuring new buildings meet standards for climate change resiliency, and continuing to monitor and assess the impacts of climate change on our transportation network.
- Reducing the impact of Yukon government transportation by modernizing our vehicle fleet, improving fuel efficient driving practices, reducing idling and encouraging employees to find alternatives to driving.

Highways and Public Works is already making progress on a number of these actions, for example:

- We have completed energy assessments on 26 buildings in preparation for more than \$45M of investment in retrofits, heating upgrades, renewable energy and energy conservation. This is in addition to many projects already completed. Significant upgrades to one building led to a 1% reduction in the Yukon government's overall energy consumption.
- We have incorporated energy reduction targets in new buildings. For example, our new 150 bed continuing care facility exceeded the stringent National Energy Code for Buildings by 25% and an upcoming new school will have the same target.

- We have developed a building standards manual that provides guidelines for all aspects of construction including energy performance, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and considerations for building in permafrost zones.

3. The framework for the new strategy on climate change

The objectives of the new strategy include supporting clean, secure and sustainable energy, reducing GHG emissions, ensuring Yukon is resilient to the impacts of climate change and fostering new economic opportunities. It will include actions to help achieve those objectives. While actions are still under development, it is still anticipated that they will be supported by clear milestones and completion dates, anticipated levels of greenhouse gas emissions reductions, and reporting systems to enable clear accounting of progress.

Progress to-date on the development of the new strategy:

- In 2017, a total of 31 governments and organizations such as Yukon First Nations, transboundary and municipal governments, as well as the Association of Yukon Communities and the Council of Yukon First Nations, were invited to participate in the development of the strategy. Two face-to-face meetings were held with the partner group, first in February 2018 to launch the project and again in April 2018 to discuss and plan the public engagement.
- In fall 2018, 20 public engagement events on climate change, energy and green economy were held in 12 Yukon communities and Inuvik to gather initial input into priorities and actions important to Yukoners. Approximately 300 people participated in the meetings and 28 of the 31 municipal and Indigenous governments that were invited to partner in the strategy initiative participated in the planning and/or delivery of these events. We received 481 responses to our online survey and the project team met with 22 stakeholder groups including industry associations, businesses, energy organizations, environmental non-government organizations, and others. We anticipate releasing a 'What We Heard' document in late spring.
- We met again with the partner group on February 12 and 13, 2019 to discuss the initial input into the strategy, identify gaps, and to collaboratively identify a process for defining priorities and drafting the strategy.

4. Which department is taking the lead

The Government of Yukon is working collaboratively with Yukon First Nations, transboundary Indigenous groups, and Yukon municipalities to develop a new climate change, energy and green economy strategy. On the Yukon government side, this initiative is being co-lead by the departments of Environment, Energy Mines and Resources, and Economic Development. Highways and Public Works has been a full participant throughout this process.

Sincerely,



Jaime W. Pitfield
Deputy Minister

cc: Justin Ferbey, Deputy Minister, Economic Development
Jennifer Macgillivray, Assistant Deputy Minister, Highways and Public Works
Priyank Thatte, Project Director, Highways and Public Works
Darryl Froese, Project Manager, Highways and Public Works