



FOR RELEASE
May 1, 2013

Sport minister and Vuntut Gwitchin MLA to meet with AWG International Committee

WHITEHORSE—The Arctic Winter Games International Committee is convening a special meeting in Vancouver, BC, on May 5 to review options for inclusion of all sports at the 2016 Arctic Winter Games in Greenland.

Community Services Minister Elaine Taylor and Independent Vuntut Gwitchin MLA Darius Elias will join ministers and political leaders from all six permanent member jurisdictions including Northern Alberta, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Alaska and Greenland.

"The Arctic Winter Games are a pivotal aspect of our sport development system," Taylor said.

"The discussions at the meeting this weekend are essential not only to the success of the 2016 Games, but also to the future of the Games going forward. Our goal is to enable young northern athletes to participate in a full Arctic Winter Games experience."

In September, the international committee announced that six sports would not be part of the Greenland Games due to limited hosting capacity and lack of facilities. Since that time, the ministers responsible for sport in Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut have been calling upon the Arctic Winter Games International Committee to find ways to host these sports in other locations, including options for satellite venues in Nunavut or in other permanent partner jurisdictions.

Last November, all members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly voted unanimously in favour of a motion from the Independent MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin, Darius Elias. The motion stated that the legislative assembly supports the Community Services minister in her pan-northern efforts to ensure that the sports of speed skating, figure skating, curling, gymnastics, midget hockey and dog mushing are included in the 2016 Arctic Winter Games.

"The Arctic Winter Games are vital for our young people across the North and necessary for them to learn to compete to the best of their ability," Elias said. "I strongly believe in the importance of the games and I am pleased to help represent Yukon to make sure that our youth have opportunities at the world's premier northern sport and cultural event."

The Arctic Winter Games International Committee oversees the high profile circumpolar sport competition by defining the strategic direction for the games, selecting host cities, awarding the Hodgson Trophy and providing overall governance. The permanent member jurisdictions of the committee are Northern Alberta, the Northwest Territories, Yukon, Nunavut, Alaska and Greenland. Teams from all six permanent member jurisdictions along with Team Sapmi, Team Yamal and Team Nunavik are scheduled to participate in the 2016 Games. For more information on the Arctic Winter Games, visit www.arcticwintergames.org.

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News Release #13-109



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