

WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION BOARD

MINISTERIAL BRIEFING BOOK – FALL SESSION 2023

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Fall 2023

Assessment Rates

WSCB

Recommended response:

- This government commends the Board of Directors of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board for the commitment and effort they invest every year in establishing assessment rates that are fair to employers and workers.
- The rates determine the amount of money that employers contribute to the Compensation Fund so that the Fund can support workers who are injured.
- Rates are about caring for the workers who fuel Yukon's economy.
 - Employers and workers can help lower those rates by reducing workplace injuries and supporting the successful return of injured workers to the workplace.
- Assessment rates remain stable for 2024 with only minor increases to four industry groups.
- The majority of employers will see their rates remain stable or decrease.
- The Chair and President/CEO of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board will appear before the Legislative Assembly this fall.
 - I encourage members to ask questions at that time.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- This may be an issue as assessment rates were announced in late summer 2023.
-

Background:

- Assessment rates are driven by three factors:
 - Costs associated with caring for workers who are injured in Yukon workplaces, such as wage loss benefits and healthcare costs.
 - The performance of the Board's investment portfolio, which historically has been favourable.
 - Administration costs, including providing services to workers and employers.
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Assessment Rates

WSCB

- Assessment rates reflect industry performance over a 10-year period. Even if an employer is performing well, with a solid health and safety program and few workplace injuries, they may experience a rate change due to overall rate group performance.
- An assessment rate is the amount an employer pays for every \$100 of assessable payroll.
- Rate group assessment rates will change in 2024 as follows:
 - Resources and Transportation Low decreased from \$2.45 to \$2.30
 - Resources and Transportation Medium decreased from \$4.40 to \$4.15
 - Resources and Transportation High increased from \$7.43 to \$7.51
 - Construction Medium had no change at \$3.35
 - Construction High increased from \$4.92 to \$5.00
 - Services Low increased from \$0.76 to \$0.80
 - Services Medium decreased from \$1.59 to \$1.53
 - Services High decreased from \$2.27 to \$2.19
 - Government increased from \$1.84 to \$1.93
 - The government rate group includes the Government of Yukon, municipalities and First Nations.
- 1,858 employers will see decreased rates.
- 657 employers will see no change to their rates for 2024.
- 1,584 employers will see increased rates.
- No industries will be reclassified in 2024

Approved by:

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President/CEO, WSCB

September 5, 2023

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note 1.2

Fall 2023

Employer Rebate 2022

WSCB

Recommended response:

- This government commends the Board of Directors of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board on its prudent management of the Compensation Fund in the best interests of workers and employers.
- At the end of 2021, the Compensation Fund's funded position was 143%, which is above the target range of 121%-129%.
- The Board's management has resulted in the Fund being well-prepared for the drastic drop in the markets that occurred in 2022.
- At the end of 2022, the Compensation Fund's funded position was 131%.
- Any decisions on rebates rests with the Board of Directors.

Additional response:

- The Chair and President/CEO of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board will appear before the Legislative Assembly during this session.
 - I encourage members to ask them questions about rates and rebates at that time.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- There may be questions about a rebate for 2022 in light of the funded position at the end of 2022 above the target range.

Background:

- The safety and compensation systems are funded by assessments collected from employers who are registered with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
 - The Board's funded position is considered when determining assessment rate changes, rebates and subsidies.
 - Worker benefits and prevention activities are never affected.

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Employer Rebate 2022

WSCB

- Distributing the Compensation Fund's surplus reserves to eligible employers in the form of rebates accelerates the movement of the Fund towards its target levels.
- The Board of Directors is committed to maintaining the Compensation Fund at a target range of between 121% and 129% of total liabilities. The target range is established by terms set out in the Board's funding policy.
- At the end of 2021, the funded position had increased to 143%, largely due to strong investment returns.
- With the drop in the markets in early 2022, the funded position dropped into the target range.
- At the end of 2022, the funded position increased to 131%.
- Maintaining the target range ensures rates charged to employers represent the actual costs of the system and reduces volatility in the rates.
- The Board has distributed five rebates to employers:
 - 2015 approximately \$10M
 - 2016 approximately \$10M
 - 2017 approximately \$10M
 - 2018 approximately \$5M
 - 2020 approximately \$10M

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Fall 2023

Minto Mine Assessments Owed

WSCB

Recommended response:

- The workers' compensation system and the workplace health and safety system are funded by employers through the payment of assessments.
- When Minto Mine ceased operations, I am aware that there were unpaid assessment amounts owing to the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
- I want to take this opportunity to stress that although Minto Mine owes money to the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board, any injured employee of Minto Mine with an accepted claim will not have their compensation benefits affected.
- The health and safety of all Yukon workers is important to this government and a priority of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
- With Minto Mine currently in receivership, the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board has submitted a Proof of Claim outlining monies owing and will continue to work with relevant parties to recover outstanding funds.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- There may be questions about potential impacts on injured Minto Mine workers with the closure of the mines and assessment amounts unpaid.

Background:

- The safety and compensation systems are funded by assessments collected from employers who are registered with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
 - Worker benefits and prevention activities are never affected.
- Minto Metals, which operated the Minto Mine, announced in May 2023, that operations at the mine ceased.

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Minto Mine Assessments Owed

WSCB

- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board has filed a Proof of Claim with the receiver outlining assessment amounts owing in the amount of \$275,488.04.

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President/CEO, WSCB

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Fall 2023

Prosecutions Before the Courts

WSCB

Recommended response:

- The health and safety of workers is important to this government and a priority for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
- I am aware of two cases currently before the courts where charges have been laid under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.
- I will not make any comment on a matter that is before the court.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- These two cases may attract media attention as they progress through the courts.
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Background:

- The two cases before the courts are as follows:
 - Fatality at km 551 on the Klondike Highway, close to Moose Creek Lodge. Employer is Saffa Engineering Incorporated (fatality date of November 13, 2021).
 - Fatality outside of Dawson City. Employer is Stuart Placer Ltd (fatality date of April 23, 2021).
- Where there are serious infractions, administrative penalties and prosecutions before the courts can arise.
- Under the previous *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the maximum administrative penalty was up to \$5,000 for a first offence and a further \$500 penalty for each additional day the offence continued.
- The maximum administrative penalty was up to \$10,000 for a second and subsequent offence and a further \$1,000 penalty for each additional day.
- Under the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*, administrative penalties and fines (resulting from prosecution through the courts) are as follows:
 - Administrative penalties

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Prosecutions Before the Courts

WSCB

- Not exceeding \$250,000 per offence, and \$15,000 per day for each day the offence continues.
- Fines
 - Not exceeding \$500,000 on first offence, and \$50,000 per day for each day the offence continues.
 - Not exceeding \$1,000,000 on second or subsequent offences, and \$100,000 per day for each day the offence continues.
 - Where a person is convicted of an offence, in addition to the above fines, a person may be imprisoned for a term not exceeding two years.

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Fall 2023

Victoria Gold Wrongful Dismissal Lawsuits

WSCB

Recommended response:

- I am aware that two former Victoria Gold employees are separately taking the company to court with allegations of wrongful dismissal after raising concerns about workplace harassment.
- This is a civil matter before the courts and therefore a matter that I cannot speak to.

Additional response:

- This government passed the modernized *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* in December 2021 with implementation in July 2022.
- During the engagement, we heard from Yukoners that reprisal processes should be more accessible without the requirement to solely pursue remedies through the Yukon court system.
- This new Act simplifies the processes around reprisals wherein workers may elect to have their reprisal complaint handled either through their collective agreement process or by an independent arbitrator appointed by the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
- Every worker has the right to work in an environment free from harassment. This is what Workplace Health and Safety officers work to support.

Additional Response:

- Under the regulation to prevent violence and harassment in the workplace, employers are required to:
 - Develop and implement policies and procedures to prevent violence and harassment;
 - Perform hazard assessments at their workplaces to identify hazards, including those due to any kind of violence and harassment; and

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Fall 2023

Victoria Gold Wrongful Dismissal Lawsuits

WSCB

- Put in place measures to eliminate, or control, these hazards.
- We encourage anyone who has experience violence or harassment to report it to the proper authorities.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Two former employees of Victoria Gold are taking the company to court alleging they were released from their positions after bringing forth unrelated complaints of harassment in the workplace.

Background:

- Under the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*, workers may elect to have their reprisal complaint handled either through their collective agreement process or by an independent arbitrator appointed by WSCB.
 - The decision of the arbitrator is final and binding.
- Once the elements of a reprisal have been established, the onus shifts to the employers or trade union to prove that the action was not a reprisal under the Act.
- A Violence and Harassment Prevention Regulation came into force September 4, 2021; this regulation provide tools to prevent and mitigate workplace violence and harassment.
- A workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention Guide is available at wcb.yk.ca that provides information and templates for employers.

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Minto Mine Maintaining a Safe Workplace

WSCB

Recommended response:

- The health and safety of all Yukon workers is important to this government and a priority of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board. Every worker has the right to work in an environment where hazards are appropriately identified and controlled to the greatest extent possible.
 - This is what workplace health and safety officers work to support.
- With the sudden closure of the Minto Mine earlier this year, safety officers have visited the site to ensure the workplace remains safe.
- Workplace health and safety officers are actively working with those still on site at the Minto Mine to ensure compliance with the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- There may be questions about ongoing care and maintenance of the Minto Mine after its closure in May 2023.

Background:

- Minto Metals, which operated the Minto Mine, announced in May 2023, that operations at the mine ceased.
- Workplace Health and Safety officers are working with Boreal Engineering, Yukon Government's designated prime contractor, to ensure the mine's transition into care and maintenance is done in compliance with the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*.

Approved by:



President/CEO, WSCB

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Wildland Firefighter Cancer Presumption

WSCB

Recommended response:

- This government recognizes the invaluable contribution of every Yukoner who fights fires, whether full- or part-time, professionally or as a volunteer.
- A regulation covering presumptive cancer coverage for firefighters under the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* came into force on July 1, 2022.
- There are now 19 cancers included under the presumption, including pancreatic and thyroid, alongside three cancers that primarily affect women.
 - This latter addition recognizes the increasing role that women are taking on in fighting fires.
- Any worker not covered under the presumption who contracts cancer as a result of their employment can still apply for compensation.
- These claims will be adjudicated by qualified and competent staff members of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
- At the request of this government, the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board continues to monitor the research regarding the link between cancers and wildland firefighters.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The expanded list of presumptive cancers is among the most comprehensive coverage for firefighters in Canada.

Background:

- The 19 cancers now included are:
 - multiple myeloma
 - primary leukemia
 - primary non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
 - primary site bladder cancer
 - primary site brain cancer

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Wildland Firefighter Cancer Presumption

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- primary site breast cancer
 - primary site cervical cancer
 - primary site colo-rectal cancer
 - primary site esophageal cancer
 - primary site kidney cancer
 - primary site lung cancer
 - primary site ovarian cancer
 - primary site pancreatic cancer
 - primary site penile cancer
 - primary site prostate cancer
 - primary site skin cancer
 - primary site testicular cancer
 - primary site thyroid cancer
 - primary site ureter cancer
 - Yukon enacted presumptive legislation for firefighters in 2011.
 - Full-time, part-time, volunteer and wildland firefighters are entitled to compensation benefits if they suffer a cardiac arrest whilst participating in an emergency response or within twenty-four hours of the end of actively participating in an emergency response.
 - Full-time, part-time and volunteer firefighters were covered for ten different types of primary site cancer, subject to a minimum service period.
 - Wildland firefighters are excluded under presumptive work-related cancer legislation.
 - There is a large body of research papers on the subject of the prevalence of cancers amongst firefighters.
 - There is significant evidence that firefighters develop mesothelioma at more than double the rate of the general population.
 - Mesothelioma is caused by exposure to asbestos fibers; asbestos is common in older buildings and firefighters could be exposed when battling fires in these locations.
 - For other forms of cancer, the evidence of increased prevalence amongst firefighters is not as strong.

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Wildland Firefighter Cancer Presumption

WSCB

- Wildland firefighters are currently excluded from the cancer presumption.
- There is little evidence of an increased risk of cancer for wildland firefighters, although a new study calls this assertion into question (see below).
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board and the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) continue to monitor the research and share any new information to inform future decision making.
- Wildland firefighters in Yukon are not typically exposed to burning manufactured materials that structural firefighters deal with.
- The IAFF has raised concerns that manufactured materials release significant amounts of carcinogenic chemicals when they burn, thereby increasing cancer risk.
- Research remains ongoing with regards to the link between certain cancers and wildland firefighters.
- The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) published their report in spring 2023 on the relationship between firefighters and cancer.
- The results are as follows:
 - There is evidence of cancerous occupational exposure for firefighters, specifically mesothelioma and bladder cancer.
 - There is positive association of occupational exposure for firefighters for colon cancer, prostate cancer, testicular cancer, malignant melanoma of the skin and non-Hodgkin lymphoma.
 - Overall, occupational exposure as a firefighter is carcinogenic.
- This study concluded that its evaluation of occupational exposure as a firefighter should be presumed to apply to all firefighters, including men and women, and to all firefighting settings (e.g., municipal, wildland, vehicular) and employment arrangements (career, part-time, volunteer).

Approved by:

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President/CEO, WSCB

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Session Briefing Note 3.2

Fall 2023

Workplace Violence and Harassment

WSCB

Recommended response:

- This government is proud of our efforts to improve health and safety in Yukon workplaces, and we are delivering on our commitment.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board is continuing the work of communicating the importance of health and safety to Yukon workers and employers.
- Violence and harassment are not welcome in any Yukon workplace.
- The *Violence and Harassment Prevention Regulation* came into force September 4, 2021 and provides tools to prevent and mitigate workplace violence and harassment.
- Tools that have been developed to help workers and employers prevent workplace violence and harassment include a Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention Guide, an online app, policy and procedures templates, slide show templates and a Safety Talk on this issue.
- I encourage any worker or employer who has questions about workplace violence and harassment to contact the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- There may be questions as to the role of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board when it comes to workplace violence and harassment.

Background:

- Workplace violence is generally understood as the threatened, attempted or actual application of physical force toward a worker that is likely to cause harm or lead a worker to believe that they are likely to be harmed.

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Workplace Violence and Harassment

WSCB

- Workplace harassment is generally understood as any objectionable comments or behaviours that we know, or should know, are likely unwelcome.
 - This includes any inappropriate comments or objectionable behavior relating to a worker's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, age, disability, religious beliefs or ethnic background.
- Risks of violence and harassment are higher in some sectors including health care, education, government, emergency services and the service sector.
- When a complaint or incident of violence and harassment is reported to WSCB, the role of the safety officer is to check to ensure employers, supervisors and workers are complying with workplace violence and harassment prevention requirements.
 - They may do this as part of a general inspection of a workplace or when investigating a specific complaint or incident.
 - Safety Officers do not determine the merits of harassment files.
 - Orders are written if the employer has gaps in their policies or procedures.
- A worker who has or may have suffered any work-related injury, including violence and harassment in the workplace, needs to tell their employer what has happened and seek any required medical attention as soon as possible.
- To file a claim, a worker needs to submit an "Application for Compensation Benefits" form to WSCB. The claim must be filed within 12 months of the injury.
- Case managers at WSCB process claims looking at all of the evidence and may ask for additional information if needed to make a decision for entitlement. Each claim is decided on its own merits and on a case-by-case basis.

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President/CEO, WSCB

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Session Briefing Note 4.1

Fall 2023

Psychological Injury Claims Including PTSD

WSCB

Recommended response:

- Psychological injuries continue to be a priority for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board and this government.
 - The board accepts psychological injury claims that meet the requirements set out by legislation and policy.
 - Unfortunately, we continue to see Yukon workers suffering from these types of injuries at work.
- Whenever we talk about psychological injury, we have to remind ourselves that prevention is the key.
- We can all look forward to improved measures concerning the mental health of Yukoners with the regulations aimed at preventing workplace violence and harassment.
- The regulations received assent on September 4, 2020 and came into force on September 4, 2021.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board has produced guidelines and training materials for workers and employers, including an online app, and is working with stakeholders as they develop their Violence and Harassment prevention programs.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Mental health issues continue to be a topic of discussion and front of mind in Yukon workplaces.
- There may be interest in the progress of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board's efforts towards preventing psychological injuries.

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Fall 2023

Psychological Injury Claims Including PTSD

WSCB

Background:

- The regulations for preventing workplace violence and harassment received assent on September 4, 2020.
- Two areas of change are:
 - A new regulation that addresses violence and harassment as workplace hazards; and
 - Enhancements to existing regulations about hazard assessment.
- The PTSD presumption came into effect when the amendments made to the *Workers' Compensation Act* in Bill 8 received assent on November 27, 2017.
- Claims for psychological injury may be denied because the worker does not have a diagnosed psychological injury, as required by the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* and policy, or the injury was found to be caused by something other than work duties.
- Introducing the PTSD presumption increased awareness of psychological injury in the workplace. The numbers of claims for PTSD and other psychological injuries leveled off in 2019.
- Costs for psychological assessment and treatment are leveling off as well, but represent a significant percentage of overall medical claims costs. Use of early and safe return to work interventions and a supportive, collaborative case management approach have been found to enhance success and reduce costs.
- Ongoing treatment, case management, and workplace support are often required long-term for workers with psychological injuries.
- Mental health has been affected with COVID-19 and we see an impact in treatment costs, which are increasing and the duration of claims is extending.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board is created an after-school running program to promote mental health for girls and 2SLGBTQ+ people aged 9-16.
- The goal is to build psychological resiliency through education and self-esteem development and prevent psychological injury at an early age.
- The aim of the program is to equip youth with resiliency so that recovery is swift should an injury occur.

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Psychological Injury Claims Including PTSD

WSCB

- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board partnered with the University of Fredericton to provide Yukoners access to the tools they need to prevent psychological injuries.
- This partnership aims to encourage employees struggling with mental health to seek supports when required, and for employers to gain the knowledge necessary to provide support.
- The programs offered include:
 - Enhancing Workplace Resiliency (1 course – 2 hours)
 - Basic Certificate in Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (1 course – 2.5 hours)
 - Certificate in Managing Psychological Health Issues at Work (3 courses, basic course included – 6.5 hours)
 - Advanced Certificate in Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (5 courses, basic course included – 50.5 hours)
- Additional information and registration for the courses can be found at wcb.yk.ca/phscourses
- Northern Safety Network Yukon (NSNY) also offers courses on workplace harassment and violence prevention.
- CCOHS likewise offers courses on the psychological health and safety of workers.

Approved by:

_____
President/CEO, WSCB

September 5, 2023

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Fall 2023

Enforcing the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*

WSCB

Recommended response:

- The health and safety of workers is important to this government and a priority for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
- Every worker, in every Yukon workplace, has the right to work in an environment where hazards are minimized. This is what the Board's workplace health and safety officers work to support.
- Sometimes safety officers write orders to enforce compliance with the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*.
 - Whenever possible, safety officers work with employers and workers to resolve issues before taking enforcement actions.
 - When compliance is not achieved, safety officers may issue administrative penalties or other enforcement measures.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Complaints about enforcement activities often follow the actions of workplace health and safety officers.

Background:

- Part 3 Workplace Health and Safety of the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* establishes a framework of internal responsibility. Within this framework, every party in a workplace is responsible for protecting both their own health and safety and that of others in the workplace.
- Part 3 Workplace Health and Safety of the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* sets out the rights and responsibilities of everyone in the workplace.
- The *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* and Regulations establish minimum standards for dealing with workplace hazards and provide for enforcement of the law where necessary.
- Safety officers monitor compliance with laws and regulations governing workplace safety.

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Enforcing the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*

WSCB

- Safety officers explain to employers how to comply with Part 3 Workplace Health and Safety of the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* and Regulations, and help them to implement appropriate measures such as safety procedures and protocols. They can also issue orders and other enforcement measures as permitted under the Act.
- The Annual Report provides information on enforcement activities.

Approved by:

_____
President/CEO, WSCB

September 5, 2023

Date Approved

Recommended response:

- The *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* strictly prohibits me, as Minister responsible, from getting involved in any claim for compensation, an assessment matter or in any workplace health and safety matter.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board follows the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* and policies when making decisions.
- If an injured worker or an employer disagrees with a decision, I would encourage them to take advantage of the comprehensive reconsideration and appeal process provided by the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Workers and employers sometimes approach a Minister's office or opposition members to request resolution of disputes they have with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.

Background:

- The *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* states a Minister shall not be directly or indirectly involved in the determination of a claim for compensation, an assessment matter or in any workplace health and safety matter.

Approved by:



President/CEO, WSCB

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Session Briefing Note 5.3

Fall 2023

Reconsideration and Appeal Opportunities for Workers and Employers

WSCB

Recommended response:

- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board delivers services to Yukon's workers and employers while operating at arm's length from government.
- The *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* provides mechanisms for workers and employers to appeal decisions made by the board.
 - I encourage everyone to use the appropriate appeal channels if they disagree with any decision.
- The Workers' Advocate Office can assist injured workers with claim-related matters, and the Employer Advisor, through the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, is a resource for employers.
- As Minister responsible, I am prohibited from getting involved in appeals or appeal decisions.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Workers and employers sometimes approach the Minister's office or opposition members to request resolution of disputes they have with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.

Background:

- If there is disagreement with a decision made on claims, assessments, workplace health and safety orders or administrative penalties, a request may be made to have these decisions reconsidered and then appealed. There are two levels:
 - Reconsiderations are internal reviews of the initial decision by the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board
 - Appeals are external reviews of the decision by the independent Appeal Tribunal
- Reconsiderations are documentary reviews of the file.
- After reviewing the file, written submissions and any other relevant information, the decision maker will provide their decision, including rationale, to the parties.

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Fall 2023

Reconsideration and Appeal Opportunities for
Workers and Employers

WSCB

- After receiving the reconsideration decision, if the parties are still not satisfied with the decision, an appeal can be submitted to the Appeal Tribunal, an independent, quasi-judicial body.
 - The tribunal's decisions are final and binding.

Approved by:



President/CEO, WSCB

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Session Briefing Note 5.4

Fall 2023

Reprisals Against Workers

WSCB

Recommended response:

- The safety of workers in all Yukon workplaces is important to this government and to the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
- Everyone in the workplace has a responsibility to report, act on and resolve workplace safety concerns.
 - I encourage workers to report workplace safety concerns to their supervisor. This is an important way to make everyone in the workplace safer.
- In those rare cases where a worker believes they have been disciplined, dismissed or otherwise penalized by their employer for seeking compliance with the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*, their concerns may be investigated by a safety officer.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Workers and employers sometimes approach the Minister's office or opposition members to request resolutions of disputes they have with Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.

Background:

- Sections 53-56 of the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* establishes a prohibition on certain acts.
- A reprisal against a worker is the act of dismissing, disciplining or penalizing a worker because they have sought compliance with the workplace health and safety part of the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*.
- A worker who believes on reasonable grounds that an employer or trade union has taken or threatened to take reprisal against them may elect to make a written complaint either in accordance with the dispute resolution process set out in a collective agreement (if applicable) or to the board, wherein the board may refer the complaint to an arbitrator.

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Reprisals Against Workers

TAB 13
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President/CEO, WSCB

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Session Briefing Note 5.5

Fall 2023

Replacing the Mine Rescue Station

WSCB

Recommended response:

- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board's mine rescue station is a base for the delivery of important health and safety services.
- As mining activity increases in the Yukon, it is essential to have a building to house critical equipment that would be needed in an emergency.
- The current building's lifespan is at an end and it no longer satisfies operational requirements.
- The Board of Directors purchased land on Wasson Place and approved replacing the current building.
- A tender was issued earlier this year and a contract has been awarded for construction of the new mine rescue station.
- The building is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2024.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board is responsible for delivering mine rescue training and the mine rescue station is an essential component. Stakeholders may have questions about the new construction.

Background:

- In 1946, *An Ordinance Governing the Safe Operation of Mines in the Yukon Territory* made it mandatory for mine owners or agents to provide adequate mine rescue equipment, in good condition and available for use at all times. Under the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*, mines are still required to have adequate rescue equipment on site.
- Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*, the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Board* is responsible for delivering mine rescue training. The Mine Rescue Station is a key resource for delivering training and supporting mine rescue operations in the Yukon.

Session Briefing Note 5.5

Fall 2023

Replacing the Mine Rescue Station

WSCB

- The exact age of the existing mine rescue station building is unknown, but is estimated to have been built in the late 1950s.
 - In 2008, the property value was assessed and the building given another 10 years of economic life.
- In 2016, the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board contracted an engineering firm to conduct a hazardous building materials assessment.
 - The assessment determined demolition will be safer and more cost-effective than renovation.
- Currently, the building is used to store mine rescue equipment.
- A tender for design work was issued in the first quarter of 2019 and awarded to local design firm, Kobayashi + Zedda.
- Construction started in June 2023.
- The impact on assessment rates is expected to be minimal.

Approved by:

_____
President/CEO, WSCB

September 5, 2023

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note 6.1

Fall 2023

Summary of Accomplishments

WSCB

Accomplishment	Significance	Priority	In mandate letter?
April 2023 to present Social media presence on timely and relevant workplace health and safety issues (e.g. working outside in summer heat, working with presence of wildfire smoke)	The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board has heard from stakeholders that they want timely workplace safety information delivered in real-time through social media.	Medium	No
January 2023 New App: Prevention of Workplace Violence and Harassment	This new app is a resource to deliver accurate workplace violence and harassment prevention information to Yukoners in an easy-to-access and secure manner. The app is designed to work from any mobile device.	Medium	No
January 2022 to present Facilitated the coming-into force of the <i>Workers' Safety and Compensation Act</i> with stakeholder communication sessions, outreach, updated policies, website, IT systems and forms	Implementation of <i>Workers' Safety and Compensation Act</i> required substantial internal and external updates to existing materials.	High	Yes

Session Briefing Note 6.1
Summary of Accomplishments

TAB 15
Fall 2023
WSCB

Accomplishment	Significance	Priority	In mandate letter?
January to July 2022 Policy Engagement to align statutory policy instruments with the new Act	Amendments to policies are required to fully implement the new Act on July 1, 2022.	High	Yes
December 2021 Assent of Bill 8, <i>Workers' Safety and Compensation Act</i>	Modern, clear legislation that recognizes and addresses the nature of work in the 21 st century, streamlines administrative processes, and enhances workplace safety through combined emphasis of workplace health and safety and compensation.	High	Yes

Approved by:



President/CEO, WSCB

September 5, 2023

Date Approved

Housing Issues

Yukon Housing Corporation

Recommended response:

- There are challenges the Yukon's housing continuum, including:
 - a lack of affordable rental supply;
 - high house prices and mortgage rates; and
 - homelessness and a lack of access to housing with services.
- Exceptionally high building costs and rising interest rates are creating significant challenges for new housing projects, for both Yukon Housing Corporation and its partners.
- We continue working hard to move projects forward - through collaboration and strong partnerships - to provide relevant solutions to Yukoners' housing needs.

Additional response:

- Our government is seeking to increase housing options across the continuum and to make housing more affordable for Yukoners. (See [Tab #0](#))
- We continue to work to increase housing and land supply and to provide rental subsidies and support programs for homeowners to offer more affordable options for Yukoners.
- Following the 2022 Office of the Auditor General's (OAG) report, the Corporation and Department of Health and Social Services continue to progress implementing the OAG's recommendations. ([Tab #09](#))

Context:

- On a square footage basis, contractors' bids for YHC projects have more than doubled in the last two years alone.
- The rental vacancy rate in the Yukon for all building types is currently 2.2 per cent (YBS Spring Rental Survey).
- The Banks 5-year average mortgage interest rate increased from 4.75 per cent in February 2022 to 6.24 per cent in May 2023 (Weekly Updates).

Housing Issues

Yukon Housing Corporation

Background:

- In 2022-23, the Yukon Housing Corporation lapsed 34 per cent of its revised capital budget.
 - This was largely due to cancellation and scaling back of projects being supported through the corporation's loans and grants programs.
- New housing projects led by YHC's partners – including the Safe at Home Society and the Vimy Heritage Housing Society – continue to face delays.
- The 5th and Rogers RFP received only a single application. It is currently under review.

Approved by:



Colin McDowell
A/ President, Yukon Housing Corporation

September 8, 2023

Date approved

ENV #21 / EMR #36

Fall 2023

Session Briefing Note Our Clean Future Implementation

Environment and Energy,
Mines and Resources

Recommended response:

- Our Clean Future is the Government of Yukon's path to address the climate emergency.
- The strategy is continually being strengthened year after year as we assess our progress, review new research, consider the input of others and identify new and innovative solutions.
- We have committed to an ambitious target of reducing our emissions by 45 per cent below 2010 levels by 2030.
- We have also committed to ensuring the Yukon is highly resilient to the impacts of climate change by 2030, because we know the North will face climate impacts.

Additional response:

- It is important to look back on our progress to date and remain diligent in implementation when it comes to addressing climate change.
- We have legislated greenhouse gas emissions targets and associated reporting through the Clean Energy Act. (See EMR BN #31 / ENV #23)
- We launched the five-year Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership this year which will enhance the agriculture sector's resiliency and adaptation to climate change. (See EMR BN # 20)
- In collaboration with Yukon's public utilities, we exceeded our target to install seven megawatts of renewable electricity capacity through the Micro-Generation program by 2030. (See EMR BN #37)
- We launched the Better Buildings program to offer affordable financing for energy retrofits on Yukoners' homes and buildings.

ENV #21 / EMR #36

Fall 2023

Session Briefing Note Our Clean Future Implementation

Environment and Energy,
Mines and Resources

- We established a geohazard mapping program to understand risks from climate change to the Yukon's transportation corridors.
- We advanced emergency preparedness by progressing on Community Wildfire Protection Plans for Dawson City, Mayo, Watson Lake, Beaver Creek, the Town of Faro and the Kluane Lake Region.
- We have begun work on developing flood maps for all flood-prone Yukon communities. Flood maps for the Southern Lakes, Carmacks, and Teslin [are anticipated to be released in 2024](#). The next communities for flood hazard mapping will be Old Crow, Ross River and Dawson/Klondike, with work occurring in 2024-25.
- We completed the installation of a biomass heating system at Elijah Smith Elementary School in May 2023.

Third response:

- Although we have made progress on many of our commitments, there is still significant work required to meet our 45 per cent greenhouse gas emissions target reduction by 2030.
- We are working with industry to establish a mining emissions intensity target for quartz and placer mining operations.
- We will continue to build on Our Clean Future as we learn more and implement new actions. This will be reflected in future annual reports.
- [Our 2022 Annual Report will be released in late 2023. We look forward to highlighting the good work that has been done in 2022.](#)
- [As this is an adaptative management strategy which involves 14 departments and agencies, it has taken some time to ensure that the report is strategically focused on helping us reach our targets.](#)

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Session Briefing Note Our Clean Future Implementation

Environment and Energy,
Mines and Resources

- As a government, we continue to collaborate on implementation of actions.
- We will continue to work with experts, stakeholders and partner governments across the territory and beyond, to identify opportunities to accelerate and intensify our efforts to reach our ambitious targets.
- We established the Yukon Climate Leadership Council to provide advice and perspectives to support us in meeting our greenhouse gas emissions targets. We are working to integrate the work of the Council directly into Our Clean Future and continue to implement existing actions that align with their recommendations.
- With the end of the second Yukon Youth Panel on Climate Change in 2022, we are exploring how to continue mentorship opportunities on climate change for the important voice of youth.

Context — this may be an issue because:

- Climate change is of high interest to Yukoners; they will want to know the government's progress in delivering on Our Clean Future commitments.

Background:

- Our Clean Future was released on September 14, 2020.
- Our Clean Future contains 136 actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support the Yukon to be highly resilient to the impacts of climate change by 2030.
- The Our Clean Future 2020 Annual Report was publicly released on August 12, 2021. The 2021 Annual Report was publicly released on September 12, 2022.


ENV #21 / EMR #36

Fall 2023

Session Briefing Note Our Clean Future Implementation

Environment and Energy,
Mines and Resources

Approved by:



Deputy Minister
Department of Environment

2023-11-14

Date approved



Deputy Minister
Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

November 14, 2023

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

Recommended:

- All Yukon households continue to see their budgets stretched by higher prices, with lower-income households often feeling the worst effects.
- At the same time, our government continues to track inflation and its impact on Yukoners, so that we can take steps to ease the burden, as we have been doing for the last year.
- The Government of Yukon continues to work hard to make life more affordable for Yukoners and has announced an extension of the temporary \$150 Inflation Relief Rebate to reduce the impacts that inflation continues to have on Yukoners.
- All non-government residential and commercial electricity customers will see a \$50 credit on their bills starting in November 2023 and running through December 2023 and January 2024.
- Several other measures included in the 2023-24 Budget are helping to make life more affordable for Yukoners.
 - funding for food in Yukon schools;
 - the timber harvesting incentive and a support program for commercial fuelwood harvesters and retailers to boost the fuelwood supply;
 - a quarterly top-up of \$150 to eligible recipients of the Yukon Senior Income Supplement;

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability

(Corporate Note)

- o a \$100 monthly increase to eligible Social Assistance recipients;
 - o increasing the Yukon Child Benefit to \$867 per child and tying the benefit amount in future years to the rate of inflation; and
 - o a 10 per cent increase to monthly payments to caregivers with children in out of home care.
- The Government of Yukon has also made significant and ongoing financial investments in Early Learning and Child Care. The new Universal Child Care Program has reduced fees to less than \$10 per day on average.

Additional response:

- This government first established a strong record of making life more affordable for Yukoners with almost \$10 million-worth of inflation relief made available in last year's budget.
- This included more funding for Food Network Yukon, a 10 per cent top up to the Pioneer Utility Grant and rebates on the purchase of firewood.
- Yukoners are also receiving inflation relief from the federal government. This includes the accelerated Canada Workers' Benefit, the elimination of interest on student loans, a doubling of the GST tax credit, dental care and the Canada Housing Benefit for renters.

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability

(Corporate Note)

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Inflation has fallen from many decade highs but remains elevated in Canada and in the Yukon.
- Energy prices remain elevated, and higher costs for food and shelter have become prominent drivers of overall inflation in recent months. These are all areas where higher prices are more obvious to consumers.
- Housing affordability has been a concern in the Yukon for several years.
- [While remaining above historic norms, inflation of 3.8 per cent in September matched the national figure and was the lowest year-over-year increase in the Whitehorse Consumer Price Index \(CPI\) since January 2022 \(3.7 per cent\).](#)

Background:

Key government initiatives addressing inflation in the Yukon

- Our energy programs are successfully encouraging Yukon residents and local businesses to reduce their energy use, save money and choose low carbon options to live and move.
- A significant portion of the Government of Yukon's Five-Year Capital Plan is allocated to housing and land development in order to continue to help address the supply side of the housing equation.
- Yukon Housing Corporation is investing across all parts of the housing continuum, including increase to supportive housing, subsidized Community Housing, and rental subsidy programs.
- This builds on previous programs to improve affordability for Yukoners under previous budgets.
- Last year, the Government of Yukon announced almost \$10 million in new inflation relief measures targeted at vulnerable groups.

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability

(Corporate Note)

- The inflation relief rebate covered seven months at a total cost to Government of \$7.6 million. The inflation relief rebate automatically applied a \$50 credit to all residential and commercial ATCO Electric Yukon and Yukon Energy electricity bills.
- Yukoners on social assistance received a one-time payment of \$150.
- Seniors were supported by a 10 per cent top up in the Pioneer Utility grant and a one-time payment of \$150 to recipients of the Yukon Seniors Income Supplement.
- Yukoners who heat their homes with wood are eligible for a \$50 rebate per cord of fuel wood purchased from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023. Yukon also introduced the Timber Harvesting Incentive that gives commercial timber harvesters \$10 per cubic metre.
- The pilot program that gave an extra \$500 per month to Extended Family Caregiver agreement caregivers and foster caregivers was extended by 6 months to March 31, 2023.
- In June 2022, the Yukon government extended the Tourism Accommodation Sector Supplement and Tourism Non-Accommodation Sector Supplement programs, administered through Economic Development.

Yukoners are also supported by Federal Government affordability programs:

- Accelerated Canada Workers Benefit payments and new minimum entitlement started in July 2023 (\$4 billion over six years, starting in 2022-23).
- All Canada Student Loans and Canada Apprentice Loans became permanently interest-free starting in April 2023 (\$2.7 billion over five years and \$556.3 million ongoing).
- GST Tax Credit: The GST tax credit has doubled for six months in the current benefit year. Additional payment will be provided in one lump sum, before the end of the benefit year. Targeted to individuals and families with low incomes

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

(below \$39,826, and gradually phased out above that level). Single Canadians without children will receive up to an extra \$234, and couples with two children will receive up to an extra \$467 this year. Seniors will receive an extra \$225 on average.

Government initiatives which are indexed to inflation:

- Higher inflation impacts various government of Yukon programs through indexation, (indexation is updated each April unless otherwise noted), including:
 - o Tobacco Tax is updated each January
 - o Comprehensive Municipal Grant Regulation (with a one-year lag).
 - o The minimum wage.
 - o Subsidies for medical travel.
 - o Pioneer Utility grant.
 - o Residential rent caps.
 - o Seniors benefits (updated each October)
 - o Social Assistance Payments (updated each November)
 - o Student Financial Assistance (updated each school year)

Inflation outlook

- Following record annual inflation for Whitehorse of 6.8 per cent in 2022, the same increase seen nationally, monthly inflation has remained elevated in 2023. [September's inflation of 3.8 per cent was the lowest since January 2022 and matched the national increase. Prior to September, Whitehorse inflation had exceeded the Canadian figure for fourteen consecutive months.](#)

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

- Early in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, some price pressures were slower to materialize in the Yukon than in other parts of the country, as inflation for Whitehorse was amongst the lowest in Canada in the first half of 2022.
- Robust price growth in the CPI components of food, shelter and recreation, education and reading material have been key drivers of overall inflation in 2023. Stronger growth in these three components in the Whitehorse CPI, account for much of the difference between the overall levels of inflation for Whitehorse and Canada in recent months.
- The Bank of Canada continues to be aggressive in trying to get inflation under control. With a 0.25 percentage point increase in July, the Bank has raised the target for its overnight rate 4.75 percentage points since January 2022. At 5.0 per cent, the overnight rate is at its highest level since early 2001.
- Most forecasters still expect inflation in Canada will move towards historic norms over the next couple of years as the effect of higher interest rates move through the economy. Canadian inflation is expected to decline from near 7 per cent in 2022, to 3.5-4.0 per cent in 2023. Inflation in 2024 is expected to return to within the Bank of Canada's target range of 1-3 per cent.
- While inflation in Whitehorse has been stronger in recent months, it generally follows the national trend. Current expectations are for inflation to come in at 5.5 per cent in 2023, before falling to 2.5 per cent in 2024.

Carbon Taxes and Grocery Prices

- The effect of the carbon tax on CPI has contributed to inflation, but only modestly and mostly through the direct effect on fuel prices.
- According to the Bank of Canada, the direct effect of carbon tax is adding 0.15 percentage points to inflation this year.

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Inflation and Affordability

(Corporate Note)

- An economist at the University of Calgary¹, estimates that accounting for indirect effects brings this impact to 0.2 percentage points.
- For food in particular, the entire \$65 per tonne carbon tax increases monthly spending on groceries by at most \$20 per month, and likely closer to \$5 per month after accounting for emissions allowances provided by the federal Output Based Allocation system.²
- Overall, food price increases appear to be predominantly driven by other factors as prices have increased across North America independent of the implementation of a carbon tax.
- In the US, with no carbon tax system in place, food prices have increased by 26 per cent since the carbon tax came into effect in Canada in January 2018. In Canada the increase has been a similar 28 per cent.
- Whitehorse recorded an 18 per cent increase in food prices since January 2018 while Urban Alaska reported a 28 per cent increase.

INFLATION RELIEF ACROSS GOVERNMENT

Programs currently in place:

Tourism and Culture:

Community Tourism Destination Development Fund

- In October 2022, the Department of Tourism and Culture announced the creation of the Community Tourism Destination Development Fund, which is slated to run for an initial 3-year term.
- The new annual funding program is available to local businesses, First Nations governments, First Nation Development entities, municipalities and not-for-profit

¹ Trevor Tombe

² Energy and Environmental Policy Trends: Indirect Carbon Tax Costs Reduced By Policy Design, Kent Fellows and Trevor Tombe, University of Calgary

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability

(Corporate Note)

organizations for projects that will improve tourism-related services and infrastructure.

- Projects can focus on infrastructure like accommodations, attractions, activities and amenities, and special consideration will be given to umbrella projects, where multiple organizations are working together.

Creative and Cultural Industries

- In November 2021, the Department of Tourism and Culture released Creative Potential; Advancing the Yukon's Creative and Cultural Industries, a 10-year strategy to support the growth and development of the creative and cultural industries in the Yukon.
- The CCIS identified 4 strategic objectives and 22 key actions, which reflect input gathered through extensive public and sector engagement.
- We also identified 10 actions in support of pandemic recovery to be completed over 3 years as Phase 1 implementation, which includes:
 - Modernizing existing funding;
 - Offering new funding streams;
 - Industry branding and promotion;
 - Marketing and export strategies;
 - Workshops; and
 - Labour market supports.
- In 2023-24, 3 new funding programs will provide \$450,000 annually to the creative and cultural sectors, including:
 - Express Micro-grant;
 - Indigenous Artists and Cultural Carriers Micro-grant; and
 - Creative and Cultural Career Advancement Fund.

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Inflation and Affordability

(Corporate Note)

Additional Funding Programs

- Tourism and Culture also provides annual supports to the tourism and culture sectors through Transfer Payment Agreements (TPAs) with many NGOs across the Yukon and through a number of regular funding programs, including:
 - Advanced Artist Award;
 - Arts Fund;
 - Arts Operating Funds;
 - Cultural Industries Training Funds;
 - Culture Quest;
 - New Canadian Events Fund;
 - Touring Artist Fund;
 - Historic Properties Assistance Program;
 - Historic Resources Fund;
 - Museums Contribution Program;
 - Special Projects Capital Assistance Program (SPCAP); and
 - Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund;

Yukon Development Corporation:

Inflation Relief Rebate

- The Inflation Relief Rebate (IRR) provides \$50 per month to all non-government residential and commercial electricity customers to help ease the impacts of rising inflation.
- The IRR was subsequently extended for March, April, and May 2023. The budget in 2023-24 is comprised of:

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability

(Corporate Note)

- \$2,056,000 for program costs in April and May 2023 (costs for March 2023 are included in the 2022-23 Supplementary Estimates #2).
- \$3,246,000 for a further 3 additional months. We will continue to monitor inflation and costs of living, and we anticipate this will show on electricity bills next winter when electricity bills are typically higher.

Economic Development:

Paid sick leave program

- On April 1, 2023, Economic Development launched the Paid Sick Leave Rebate. The program will run for two 12-month blocks:
 - April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024; and
 - April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025
- The Paid Sick Leave Rebate is a temporary program that offers up to 40 hours of paid sick leave to employees and self-employed Yukoners that earn less than the average private-sector wage of \$33.94/hour. The program is available to employees regardless of whether their employer offers paid sick leave.

Energy, Mines and Resources:

Energy retrofits and funding to improve efficiency and offset costs

- Our energy programs are successfully encouraging Yukon residents and local businesses to reduce their energy use, save money and choose low carbon options to live and move.
- Energy efficiency programs are available for the transportation sector, renewable heating sector, and the construction sector focusing on high efficiency buildings.
- For existing homes, the Energy Branch offers the Good Energy rebate program for high performance heating systems and upgrades to thermal enclosures including insulation and windows, and high performance new homes. Taking these measures will save homeowners money on their energy costs.

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability

(Corporate Note)

- For commercial and institutional buildings, the Energy Branch offers rebates for greenhouse gas-reducing retrofits and renewable heating.
- Between January 1, 2018, and June 30, 2023, 176 high-performance retrofits to residential, commercial and institutional buildings have been completed across the territory.
- Innovative programs like the Better Buildings Program, combined with our Good Energy rebates, make energy retrofits more accessible and affordable for Yukoners.
- For First Nation and municipal buildings, the Energy Branch offers retrofit and funding support through its Community Institutional Energy Efficiency Program.
- To help increase the supply of firewood, we distributed \$315,000 to 33 Yukon businesses under the Timber Harvest Incentive program in 2022-23. We are offering this program for another year as it increased timber harvest volumes and prompted new harvesting businesses to emerge. No new applications have been received yet for this year, but we did not anticipate to see them until the fall when the businesses start operating again.
- The Government of Yukon and the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency combined financial contributions to launch a new \$200,000 support program offering funding for commercial harvesters and retailers.
- The program will help forest sector businesses with the cost of purchases and repairs from local suppliers for harvest equipment, vehicles and trailers, personal protective equipment, and other equipment. For larger harvesting businesses, the funds can also be used for things like planning and administrative costs.
- Applicants have until March 31, 2024, to apply or until available funds are exhausted.

Session Briefing Note **Inflation and Affordability** **(Corporate Note)** ---

Yukon Housing Corporation:

Projects under the Five-Year Capital Plan which support housing affordability and those in need include:

- The 47-unit housing complex at 401 Jeckell Street in Whitehorse opened in January 2023. The building provides new homes to Yukoners, including 5 three-bedroom, 12 two-bedroom, 16 one-bedroom and 14 bachelor units.
- A Yukon Housing Corporation Housing Initiatives Fund recipient, Right On Property Group, has completed Boreal Commons, a new 87-unit rental development in Whitehorse's Whistle Bend neighbourhood. This large-scale housing project will help address the need for more rental housing in the Yukon, including for more affordable and accessible units.
- Normandy Living, the Yukon's first private seniors' supportive living community, has officially opened its doors in Whitehorse with 84 modern suites, including housing units for First Nations Elders and affordable units for low-income seniors.
- Triplex housing units in Watson Lake, Mayo and Whitehorse were completed in spring 2022 and are providing affordable homes to families in each of these communities.
- A 10-Plex Mixed-Use Housing complex in Old Crow is under construction.
- Construction of a 10-Plex Housing First Project in Watson Lake started in the summer 2023 and is expected to be completed by fall 2024;
- Two accessible duplexes in Mayo and Carmacks were completed this summer and are now available for YHC clients.

Other highlights from the plan

- More homes will be created for Yukon families in rural communities through the construction of three duplexes in Dawson City and Faro. These homes are on track for completion in summer 2024.

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability

(Corporate Note)

Health and Social Services:

- A 37.5 per cent top-up to eligible Yukon Senior Income Supplement recipients' monthly payment;
- a \$100 monthly increase to eligible Social Assistance recipients; and
- a 10 per cent increase to monthly payments to caregivers of children in out of home care.

Covid-19 and other temporary inflation relief measures no longer in place:

Tourism and Culture:

COVID-19 Business Relief Programs

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Yukon acted quickly and decisively by implementing one of the most robust business relief programs in the country. This began with the Yukon Business Relief Program (YBRP) in 2020, which was open to any business from any sector that experienced at least a 30 per cent revenue loss due to the pandemic.
- In that same year, Tourism and Culture (T&C) also launched the Tourism Relief and Recovery Plan (TRRP), which was reviewed and endorsed by the Yukon Tourism Advisory Board (YTAB) and industry.
- The Tourism Relief and Recovery Plan committed \$15 million over 3 years to support the tourism sector and was focused on 4 key themes:
 - Providing tourism sector leadership;
 - Rebuilding confidence and capabilities for tourism;
 - Supporting the recovery of tourism industry operators; and
 - Refining the brand and inspiring travelers to visit.
- Through the TRRP, various financial support programs were rolled out during the course of the pandemic to sustain the tourism industry and prepare it for the eventual reopening of borders, including:

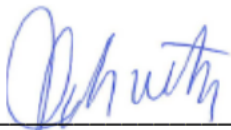
Session Briefing Note
Inflation and Affordability
(Corporate Note)

- Tourism Accommodation Sector Supplement (TASS);
- Tourism Non-Accommodation Sector Supplement (TNASS);
- Culture and Tourism Non-profit Sector Supplement;
- Great Yukon Summer (GYS) program;
- Great Yukon Summer Freeze program;
- ELEVATE program; and
- A top-up to the Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund (TCMF).

Health and Social Services:

- a one-time \$150 payment to social assistance recipients;
- a one-time payment of \$150 to Yukon Seniors Income Supplement recipients;
- a one-time 10 per cent additional payment to Pioneer Utility Grant recipients;
- a 6-month extension of \$500 per month to caregivers of children in out of home care; and
- a commitment of \$100,000 to Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition to continue to support food security across the territory.

Approved by:



Deputy Minister, Finance

October 26, 2023

Approved

Truth and Reconciliation Commission – Update on Calls to Action

Executive Council
Office

Recommended response:

- Reconciliation is an ongoing process and a shared responsibility of all governments and individuals in our society.
- Our government is deeply committed to advancing reconciliation through collaboration and partnership with Indigenous governments.
- While there is still more work to do, our efforts are resulting in meaningful change and creating better programs and services for all Yukoners.
- In honour of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation this year, we shared our progress toward addressing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action through the release of the Pathways magazine and an accompanying report.
- The magazine and report provide an update on our actions being taken across the Yukon government and in close collaboration with First Nations governments and organizations in areas including child welfare, health, education and justice.

Additional response:

- The Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nations governments are leaders in demonstrating a collaborative approach to reconciliation.
- We will continue our collaborative work to implement and report on the Calls to Action, including through work on Yukon Forum joint priorities and by implementing the *Putting People First* recommendations.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The 2023 mandate letters include a commitment to fulfill the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action.
- CASA 2023 contains a commitment to work with First Nations to continue to implement the TRC recommendations through targeted investment.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission – Update on Calls to Action

Executive Council
Office

- It is expected that the media and opposition will be interested in the fall 2023 public update, which will be the first comprehensive public update since 2016.

Background:

- The TRC report, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, was released in June 2015. It contains 94 Calls to Action focused on redressing the harms resulting from Residential Schools and creating better relations between the federal, provincial and territorial governments and Indigenous Peoples. Thirty-two of the Calls to Action relate directly to YG.
- YG and Yukon First Nations (YFNs) have collaborated on addressing the Calls to Action under the 2017 Yukon Forum Joint Priority Action Plan and through other reconciliation initiatives, such as supporting the important work of the YFN-led Yukon Residential Schools and Missing Children Project.
- YG has taken additional steps to address the Calls to Action, including:
 - establishing the position of Assistant Deputy Minister of First Nations Initiatives at the Department of Education, signing an agreement to establish a YFN School Board, and entering into education agreements with all YFNs (speaks to Calls 7 and 10 directed to the federal government);
 - supporting Indigenous athletes and the North American Indigenous Games (Call 88);
 - implementing the YFN Procurement Policy (relates to Call 92) and the Representative Public Service Plan: *Breaking Trail Together* (relates to Call 7);
 - working with YFNs and Yukon Indigenous women's groups to implement the Yukon's *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2-Spirit+ People Strategy* (MMIWG2S+ Strategy) (relates to Call 41);
 - participating at the Trilateral Table on the Wellbeing of YFN Children and Families to address gaps for culturally appropriate parenting programs (Call 5); and

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission
– Update on Calls to Action**

Executive Council
Office

- receiving input from YFNs on Health and Social Services programming through the Mental Health Advisory Committee (relates to Call 19).

Approved by:



Deputy Minister, Executive Council Office

October 10, 2023

Date

Session Briefing Note (Corporate)**Fall 2023****2023-24 Supplementary Estimates #1**

Finance

Key Information

Recommended response:

- The 2023-24 Supplementary Estimates No. 1 forecasts an overall gross increase of \$132.7 million in O&M spending, with an offsetting increase of \$26.8 million in recoveries. The net increase in new O&M spending is forecast at \$105.9 million.
- Revenues are expected to increase by \$18.7 million, mainly to reflect an increase of \$2 million to the Canada Health Transfer and \$15 million for federal funding for Affordable Housing in the North.
- A large portion of the increase in O&M is for the new collective agreement between the Government of Yukon and Yukon Employee's Union. This new collective agreement was ratified in June and accounts for a \$36.9 million increase in O&M.
- The Supplementary Estimates also respond to several new or unanticipated challenges requiring funding. Some of these items include:
 - \$25.0 million for environmental care and maintenance work at the Minto Mine following the cessation of operations at the site in May, which will ensure that our environment remains protected;
 - \$19.6 million for wildland firefighting costs in response to the significant fire season experienced in the territory and which helped ensure the safety of Yukoners;
 - \$14.9 million in response to operational funding pressures at the Yukon Hospital Corporation to ensure that Yukoners have access to the health care services and supports they need;

Session Briefing Note (Corporate)**2023-24 Supplementary Estimates #1****Key Information**

- \$9.8 million in response to cost pressures for Insured Health to support the wellbeing of Yukoners; and
- \$1.9 million to support the Substance Use Health Emergency Strategy, and \$1.4 million for initiatives to support reconciliation with Yukon First Nations governments.
- The Supplementary Estimates also include a \$21.4 million capital allocation to support the development of a marine services platform in Skagway, which will create positive opportunities for Yukon's mining industry and its broader economy. We have identified offsetting adjustments based on timelines, loan program uptake, and the progress of various capital projects to accommodate this new project without any gross changes to capital spending.
- The Yukon government has maintained its surplus by making use of its contingency fund, included as part of Budget 2023-24. This \$50 million contingency fund helped shelter the government's fiscal position and allowed us to respond to emerging challenges throughout the year. The use of the contingency fund has allowed the government to present a revised surplus of \$3.6 million as part of these Supplementary Estimates.

Additional response:

- Changes in the Supplementary Estimates result in a revised year-end net debt of \$423.8 million.

Session Briefing Note (Corporate)

Fall 2023

2023-24 Supplementary Estimates #1

Finance

Key Information

- The use of the contingency fund will cover the following emergency cost pressures:
 - \$25 million for unplanned maintenance costs at the Minto mine;
 - \$19.6 million for increased wildland firefighting activity.
 - \$2.3 million for other emergency response measures, like the Village of Mayo evacuation in response to the Talbot Creek fire;
 - and \$1.9 million for Substance Use Emergency response.
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Context—this may be an issue because:

- The 2023-24 Second Appropriation Act is tabled in the fall session and will be the subject of debate.
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Background:

- Supplementary Estimates are used annually by a government to account for spending that is unforeseen at the time of tabling the annual Budget. It is common to have one or two spending updates throughout the fiscal year.
- They are tabled during the fall and spring sessions, debated and voted on in the legislature and provide departments with increased spending authority for O&M and Capital for the current fiscal year.

Approved by:



Deputy Minister, Finance

September 29, 2023

[Date approved]