



FOR RELEASE
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Northern governments exploring new options for sports removed from 2016 Arctic Winter Games

WHITEHORSE—Following a decision from the Arctic Winter Games International Committee (AWGIC), the ministers responsible for sport in Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, along with the Lieutenant Governor of Alaska, will work together to ensure that the sports eliminated from the 2016 Arctic Winter Games (AWG) in Greenland will have an alternate multi-sport venue.

Representatives of the six permanent partners in the Arctic Winter Games met recently with the AWGIC to discuss the 2016 games. Subsequent to that meeting, the international committee confirmed it will continue with the approved sport program for the Greenland games, which excludes midget hockey, dog mushing, curling, speed skating, figure skating and gymnastics. In response, a committee is being formed, led by the Northwest Territories, to research and provide options for a non-affiliated alternate event for the excluded sports.

"Providing a multi-sport competition for young athletes across the circumpolar north is key to the continued growth and development of our sport community," Yukon Community Services Minister Elaine Taylor said. "Hosting an event such as this will give our youth the opportunity to compete in a multi-sport environment, and will ensure continued momentum in the development of sport across the North, in keeping with the vision of the Arctic Winter Games tradition."

The newly-formed committee will work to identify a jurisdiction to host the excluded sports, including possible locations in NWT, Yukon, Nunavut and Iceland.

Alaska Lieutenant Governor Mead Treadwell said: "Team Alaska is building a generation of hockey players, speed and figure skaters, curlers, gymnasts and mushers. Fairbanks is proud to host the 2014 Arctic Winter Games, and Alaska is committed to helping athletes of all sports have the opportunity to compete. In the Arctic, we often face a lack of infrastructure, and we must overcome those obstacles together. I am confident we can conquer these challenges, and find venues for all who wish to participate in 2016."

Nunavut Community and Government Services Minister Lorne Kusugak said: "We feel that it is important to support the development of these sports in the North and provide our young athletes with an opportunity to train and compete at a high level. This event will provide athletes and coaches with a goal to train toward and the opportunity to represent their home territories in a high-level competition."

NWT Municipal and Community Affairs Minister Robert C. McLeod said: "There will be logistical considerations to look at. However, we are confident that an alternate event will be planned and will give the athletes a very important sporting experience."

The committee is being asked to report back to government by October 2013.

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