

Mike Drake for Nahendeh MLA

September 13, 2019

In reply to NWT Association of Communities – Questions for MLA Candidates Election 2019:

(Answers in number sequence to each question received)

1. A \$40 million shortfall still exists for community governments. What is your position on the funding formula for community governments and the significant shortfall not being addressed over the past five years?

While it's very easy to agree that closing the Community Funding gap is something we need to do sooner than later. I would caution that the money needs to come from somewhere, the GNWT's fiscal outlook is not great and there are many priorities. However, I absolutely agree that we need to look carefully at Community funding and continue to increase the funding .

2. What steps will you take to ensure that communities funding shortfall as identified by MACA is addressed and do you commit to prioritizing funding?

I think being fully aware of the situation is the first step. I have been working with Community governments in the north for many years and have first hand knowledge of the funding gap issues. I am committed to using this knowledge when advising my potential MLA college's of the funding shortfall realities facing our communities.

3. Homelessness, mental health and addictions are serious issues in the North. Are you willing to work to ensure these issues get addressed and potential solutions put in place in a timely manner?

Yes, I am willing to address these issues as quickly as possible. I believe the answer lies in a multi Departmental response, including Health and Social Services, Housing and others. In the Nahendeh Region one of the biggest contributing factors would be a lack of singles housing, which coupled with any mental health or addictions issues inevitably has homelessness implications that are just not acceptable.

4. How do you think communities can prepare for the climate change crisis that is presently occurring in many communities and what is your position on the Territorial Government finding solutions and taking a leadership role with funding?

When I think of climate change in the Nahendeh Region, I may have a bit of a different take on the impact for communities. While permafrost concerns are a problem in some areas of Nahendeh. I believe the biggest threat communities are facing as a result of Climate Change is weather related, more specifically the Forest Fire threat and the extended fire season we are experiencing. Of course, Forest Fires are a serious threat to communities and there are many things a community can do to help alleviate the threat. Things like building Community fire guards are important and having up to date Emergency Plans. Of course I am aware of the serious impact Climate Change is having on our more northerly communities and I would fully support identifying additional funding from either within the GNWT or Federal Government funding to work on the problem.

5. What are your views on the issue of the early childhood education deficiency in the NWT and how it relates to post-secondary success of students and do you support an Auditor General Review of the education system?

Yes, I am supportive of an Auditor General Review, our education system is clearly failing a large percentage of our youth and we need to fix it right away.

6. The 2018 Federal Budget affirmed that its expectation is that a 25% portion of the revenues from cannabis excise taxes provided to the Territory and Provinces be transferred to municipalities and local communities. What is your view of the GNWT deciding that there will be no revenues passed on to the municipalities from the Territorial Government?

The first thing to do is see where the actual financial impact has been. Has there been a cost to community governments? If so, how much and what for part of the problem with a one stop answer is the differences in our community size and their respective enforcement or education costs if any ?

So, I agree that the revenue from cannabis sales be distributed or available to those communities negatively impacted or effected financially.