

MEMBER'S STATEMENT – GREAT SLAVE – JUNE 1, 2009

**UPDATE ON ATCO PROPOSAL**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, last Friday the Union of Northern Workers and the Public Service Alliance of Canada held a demonstration outside of this Legislature in opposition of the sale of the NWT Power Corporation to ATCO. They were very clear: the NWT Power Corporation is owned by all residents of the Northwest Territories. It's our asset and it must remain a public asset. I agree with them.

History has shown that selling public power corporations to private interests has not resulted in lower power rates for residents over the long term. Just look at the results of the sale of the Yukon Power Corp to private interests. In the end, rates went up for the residents of the Yukon who were previously the owners of their public corporation. In Nova Scotia, the province is in the process of reversing the sale of their public power corporation. They're buying it back after the sale to private interests drove the costs of power up.

Ultimately, I believe that the two reviews that Cabinet are currently conducting are good first steps in finding ways to improve the provision of power throughout the NWT and hopefully reduce the costs of power for all residents. I look forward to the findings of these reviews.

I also support the ATCO review. I believe that it would be irresponsible not to conduct a comprehensive review of a proposal of this magnitude. I don't believe we should sell the Power Corporation. Conducting this review, in

my opinion, will help this government assess future opportunities and possibly identify some improvements which are required within our Power Corporation. All reasonable ideas and suggestions should be considered. Having said that, I know confusion still exists. During my discussions with individuals participating in the demonstration, I was asked some specific questions on process that I need to have clarified later today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## **Questions:**

1. Residents of the NWT, the owners of the Power Corporation are still curious about the ATCO proposal. Specifically, what are the details. The people want to know. When will the Premier be sharing the details of the proposal with all of the owners of the Power Corporation?
2. Although there has been a significant amount of press coverage on this topic people are still confused about the review itself and the timelines. When will an outline and a timeline of the review of the unsolicited ATCO proposal be made public?
3. Who will make the final decision to sell or not-sell the power corporation and when does the Premier anticipate that a decision will be made? Will it be made by Cabinet or, will it be done by the legislature as a whole? If it's the Legislature as a whole how will it be determined what direction will be taken? Will it be by way of a vote in this Legislature?
4. Once a tentative decision is made, will there be public meetings or hearings to discuss the GNWT position and obtain input and recommendations from all of the owners of the Power Corporation (all residents of the NWT) prior to any irreversible decisions being made.