

MEMBER'S STATEMENT – GREAT SLAVE – MARCH 11, 2009

ECOLOGY NORTH

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to draw attention to Ecology North and the work it does for the well-being of the people of the Northwest Territories.

Ecology North is a non-profit, charitable organization that supports sound environmental decision making on individual, community levels. Ecology North's central focus is public education. Its programs address three priorities: public awareness of environmental issues, sustainable living and climate change. It enjoys productive partnerships with community organizations such as the Centre for Northern Families, the Native Women's Association, the Yellowknife Community Garden Collective, NWT Recreation & Parks as well as local schools.

Ecology North organizes a full schedule of events to recognize Earth Week in April, and a sustainable living fair at Yellowknife's annual trade show. Its youth ecology club promotes awareness of environmental challenges and possible solutions among the upcoming generation of northern citizens.

Throughout the year, Ecology North offers workshops on energy efficiency, sustainable living tours that showcase ways to increase energy efficiency in homes and businesses. Its Rent-a-Plate service, featured at Folk on the Rocks, provides a means of reducing the amount of waste created by disposable dishes at large social gatherings. Natural history events help northerners gain a better appreciation of our physical surroundings. The Northwest Territories is not a cold and inhospitable wasteland, but a network of delicately balanced and perfectly adapted ecosystems.

Ecology North frequently organizes workshops, film screenings and school presentations on climate change and helps local and regional governments find practical means to respond to climate change.

Mr. Speaker, the ultimate goal of Ecology North's programs is to promote environmental and social well-being. In our technologically advanced society, it's easy to neglect our relationship with the natural world. It would be impossible to meet in this House or even conduct the activities of our daily lives were it not for clean air and drinking water, an adequate food supply and means of transport and heating our shelters. These are extremely basic elements of life, but the ways that human activity encroaches on wild spaces and fresh water supply are becoming increasingly apparent, as is the need for sustainable energy sources.

Mr. Speaker, volunteers are at the heart of Ecology North. I would like to thank the many northerners who have offered their insight and expertise to the organization since its beginnings in 1971. It is a prime example of a group of people who think globally and act locally. Let's show our continued support for their initiatives to make the North a leader in sustainable living.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.