



*Alternatives North*

**DELIVERED ELECTRONICALLY**

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau  
Prime Minister  
Government of Canada

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Finance

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson  
Minister of Environment and Climate Change

The Honourable Carolyn Bennett  
Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations

The Honourable Catherine McKenna  
Minister of Infrastructure and Communities

The Honourable Anita Anand  
Minister of Public Services and Procurement

The Honourable Harjit Sajjan  
Minister of National Defence

November 9, 2020  
By e-mail

**RE: NWT 2030 Energy Strategy Update**

Dear Prime Minister and Ministers:

The Government of the Northwest Territories has an NWT Energy Strategy 2030, but is not meeting targets to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. As the majority of funding for the NWT Energy Strategy comes from federal sources, additional action is required by your government to maximise GHG reductions in the NWT. Alternatives North is an NWT-based society with a keen interest in the future of the NWT and the health and welfare of its population. Combating climate change is one of the files we are engaged in.

Alternatives North, c/o P.O. Box 444, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N3 [info@alternativenorth.ca](mailto:info@alternativenorth.ca)

- **Prime Minister Trudeau** – We were pleased to hear you announce that your government would “get the North off Diesel by 2030” (Iqaluit, October 2019). Since the majority of diesel is used for heating and transportation rather than diesel generators, biofuels and renewable diesel need to be main program targets. In recognition of the uniquely northern issues we face, will your government specifically expand funding programs to include subsidies for wood pellets for heating and renewable diesel for transportation and diesel generation in addition to capital funding for renewable energy equipment?
- **Minister Wilkinson, Environment and Climate Change** – In your letter of October 28<sup>th</sup>, you note several federal programs “directly focused on the deployment of clean energy to reduce reliance on diesel for electricity and heating”. These programs only cover renewable energy infrastructure, and not renewable fuel subsidies. This is a significant barrier to the adoption of renewable diesel in the North, which does not require new infrastructure, but does cost more than fossil diesel. Because renewable fuels could play a large role in getting our remote communities and mines off fossil diesel (our [analysis](#) is attached), will you commit to funding renewable fuel subsidies?

Not covered in your letter of October 28<sup>th</sup> is any mention of the Clean Fuel Standard. We have been awaiting the development of the Standard for several years now. When will the Standard be available, and what will the Standard do to encourage the production and availability of renewable diesel specifically for cold-weather regions like the NWT?

- **Minister Bennett, Crown-Indigenous Relations** – We appreciate that your department has been funding renewable electricity projects in the NWT for many years. However, simply changing to a different, greener fuel, rather than developing new infrastructure, will more easily reduce GHG emissions in our remote communities. Will you commit to funding renewable fuel subsidies?
- **Minister McKenna, Infrastructure and Communities** – We understand that the GNWT hopes to use funding from the Infrastructure Bank to build the Taltson hydroelectric expansion and Great Slave Lake transmission line, despite substantial evidence that it will not cover its own maintenance costs, is unlikely to deliver proposed GHG emission reductions, and wouldn’t be built until after 2030 (our [analysis](#) attached). Would projects that reduce GHG emissions more quickly and cost effectively, such as Biomass District Heating Networks, qualify for funding from the Canada Infrastructure Bank if the GNWT were to approach with a territory-wide project proposal?
- **Minister Anand, Public Services and Procurement** – We understand that the Federal Government has committed to 100% renewable electricity powering federal buildings by 2025 and reducing overall federal GHG emissions by 40% by 2025. In the NWT, a significant portion of commercial building GHG emissions come from downtown Yellowknife. The federal government occupies two office buildings in the heart of downtown Yellowknife. They could be ideal anchor tenants for a wood pellet fired

- district heating system. Such a system could connect office towers in the same area and make a significant impact in reducing GHG emissions in the NWT. Could your department take the lead on such a district heating system?
- **Minister Sajjan, National Defence** – We understand that your department is constructing a large building in Yellowknife. Can you assure us that this building will be heated primarily by wood pellets?

We have also written the Government of the NWT's Minister of Infrastructure, as the responsible Minister for the NWT Energy Strategy, with our concerns. A copy of our correspondence is attached.

Sincerely,



Robert G Bromley  
for Alternatives North

CC:

Michael McLeod, MP, Northwest Territories  
The Honourable Carolyn Cochrane, Premier, Northwest Territories  
The Honourable Diane Archie, Minister of Infrastructure, Northwest Territories  
Paula Isaak, President, Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor)  
Cheryl Keats, Regional Director, CanNor  
Bruce MacDonald, Director, Canadian Wildlife Service, ECCC

Attached:

Climate Emergency: Getting the NWT Off Diesel – Report  
Climate Emergency: Getting the NWT Off Diesel – Plain Language Summary  
Letter to Honourable Diane Archie, GNWT Minister of Infrastructure, October 29, 2020