



Dennis Bevington
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For immediate release

NWT residents protest \$1 billion federal program cuts

Yellowknife, October 6, 2006 – Yesterday, approximately 100 residents of the Northwest Territories marched through the city, protesting cutbacks to social, cultural, health, justice and economic development programs.

On September 25, the Conservative Government announced \$1 billion had been cut from programs across the country, and promised another \$1 billion will soon be cut in “unidentified program efficiencies.”

Following a meeting between Western Arctic Member of Parliament Dennis Bevington and 17 NWT organizations last weekend, Dene National Chief Bill Erasmus organized the protest to encourage everyone to fight back against Harper’s Conservatives.

Protestors shouted “books not bombs,” and “trim the turkey, not the budget,” as municipal enforcement officers blocked traffic on the city’s main street during the busy noon hour.

Erasmus claimed residents of the Northwest Territories are at war with our own federal government. “Aboriginal governments see the feds as hostile and they use the party system to work against us. If they are not going to honour our agreements, or the (Kelowna) Accord established in British Columbia, then they are not going to listen to these groups,” said Erasmus. “If we don’t speak out, no one will speak for us.”

Bevington said he and the NDP Caucus will fight for an immediate reinstatement of the funding cuts, asking his constituents to actively support him. “We need to show this government that we will not sit back and let them take away the services and programs that we desperately need to improve our quality of life. We must send a message that we are strongly opposed to these actions,” said Bevington.

Organizations and individuals affected by the cuts are circulating petitions across the Northwest Territories, demanding the Conservatives immediately reverse them. Bevington will present the petition in the House of Commons on their behalf.

A second protest is being organized by the Dene Nation on October 12, 2006 in conjunction with a federal/territorial minister’s meeting being held in Yellowknife. It will begin at noon on Franklin Avenue near the Red Apple Restaurant, and end at the Greenstone Federal Building.

For more information, please contact:

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