

**Dennis
Bevington, MP
Western Arctic**



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Standing up for Northerners in 2007

Hello Northerners,

I am pleased to be able to produce and distribute another one of our householders for your consideration. Communications is vital in representing people from the NWT here in Ottawa. I really appreciate all of the letters, e-mails and phone calls that I receive from you all. With the assistance of my staff in Ottawa and Yellowknife, I try very hard to respond to your questions and hope that we get to you all.

My staff in both offices have been very busy answering concerns that you may have on a multitude of issues that are related to your individual challenges with the Government of Canada, such as passports, immigration, taxation or pension concerns, and opportunities to access support programs.

It has been a very busy time since the session opened in January. Many of the issues facing us in the North also face other average Canadian families, aboriginal and non-

aboriginal, but with our unique relationship to the Government of Canada, Northerners have even more pressing issues to address. This is very clearly the case. Our immense geography dictates that we cover concerns like climate change, land use and Arctic sovereignty very closely. Our strong First Nations evolving into self-governments, and our public government that gets its authority through the Minister of DIAND, presents opportunities for new relationships and political structures that do not exist in southern Canada.

In this newsletter, you will see some of the efforts that our team, fully supported by the New Democratic Party, have been making on your behalf in the House of Commons and in the North. It's very exciting work. I am privileged to have the chance to do all of this on your behalf, and I look forward to providing continuity on these issues in the future.

Thank you, merci, mahsi chol



Dennis visited the NWT snow sculptors during construction of their gold medal-winning artwork at the Ottawa Winterlude Festival in February. The team is Eli Nasogaluak, Randy Sibbeston and John Sabourin.

Arctic Sovereignty: Who's in charge?

Northerners have begun to wonder just how committed Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper is to the North. Harper and Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor have regularly said how important Arctic Sovereignty is to them. The Prime Minister recently told the *Ottawa Sun* newspaper that, "Canada's Arctic sovereignty, military and otherwise, will be, frankly, a major legacy of this government."

Unfortunately, it is becoming clear that despite the Prime Minister's words, Arctic Sovereignty is not a priority for this government. During the 2006 election, Stephen Harper promised to:

- build a port at Iqaluit;
- build a training centre in Cambridge Bay;
- build a fleet of armed icebreakers;
- deploy new search and rescue aircraft to Yellowknife to replace the aging Twin Otters
- and expand and revitalize the Rangers.

First to go was the promise to build the training centre in Cambridge Bay. Last July the Defence Minister said that the centre, if it is built, will go to Resolute Bay -- even though the Nuna-

vut government has said they want it in Cambridge Bay.

This February, a leaked copy of the new National Defence strategy showed that a port in Iqaluit would not be built -- only a refuelling station. And the promised icebreakers would actually be tiny patrol boats which couldn't operate in ice.

Then, the General in charge of Canada's military planning told a House of Commons committee that the Canadian Armed

Forces is no longer developing plans for defending the Arctic. Instead, Major General Michael Ward said Indian Affairs and Northern Development would be planning how to defend the Arctic.

After learning this, I asked the Minister of National Defence in the Houses of Commons to explain just who is in charge of defending Canada's Arctic. He responded that many departments are involved. The only thing that is clear from his answer is that no one is really in charge. This lack of clear

direction and leadership tells Northerners that the real Arctic legacy of the Harper government is more talk and no action. This is something that has become all too familiar to Northerners, whether under a Conservative government or a Liberal one.

Now we are hearing reports that the planned purchase of new search and rescue aircraft may not be happening. According to the reports, the money for the new aircraft will be used for the war in Afghanistan. The Twin Otters were purchased in 1970, and they should be replaced before they become another Sea King.

Under international law, the rule for protecting a nation's sovereignty is: "Use it, or lose it." Unfortunately, the debate on how best to protect our territorial claim to the Arctic (to use it) has focused almost exclusively on military solutions. This is not to say that our military presence in the Arctic doesn't need improvement. As a nation with more than one-third of its land mass north of 60 degrees latitude, it is sound national policy to have a military which is capable of operating effectively and defending Canadian interests in the Arctic.

The real Arctic legacy of the Harper government is more talk and no action.



Congratulations to Gail Napier (right) who ran in a mock election at the **2007 Northern Women's Leadership Conference** on February 9 and 10. The winner of the election was Gail Strikes-with-a-Gun, followed by Gerri Sharpe-Staples as the runner-up. Congrats ladies on your wonderful leadership skills!

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Time to act on Kyoto

Note: This is a portion of the Hansard transcript of Dennis Bevington's speech in the House of Commons on Thursday, Feb. 1. This speech was made in response to a motion from Stéphane Dion on Kyoto, Bill C-30.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Members of the Liberal Party have been waving around a five year old letter from the Prime Minister when he was Leader of the Alliance Party. In this letter the Prime Minister made statements about Kyoto being a socialist plan to export Canadian wealth. Yesterday it was the only question the Liberals could ask in the House, but both the Prime Minister and the Liberals are wrong. Shipping Canadian dollars to other countries, as the Liberals would have done, to meet Kyoto, is actually a capitalist plan. It is a plan to ensure that corporations can continue to expand their markets and find a way to deal with Kyoto at the lowest possible cost without any worry about the effect on the global environment.

All around the world the successful countries that have dealt with climate change are social democratic countries which have values which the NDP also has. We have a plan to meet Kyoto and it is a plan based on social democratic principles which will build the Canadian economy, create jobs for average Canadians and save working families money on their energy bills.

One of the key elements in the NDP plan is to change how we deal with energy. Canada needs an energy strategy. We need to ensure there is clean energy available not just for today but for our children and grandchildren, not a plan that allows a laissez-faire system to exist in this country to recklessly produce and sell off our fossil fuel resources.

What would a strategy look like? The primary goal of an energy strategy must be to provide a secure energy supply sufficient to meet our needs. However these needs primarily must be reduced. By reducing the needs it will enable the most

rapid transition as possible to an energy regime based on conservation and the sustainable use of renewable energy.

The goal of an energy policy must definitely not be merely to produce as much energy as possible to meet a growing global demand with no regard for social and environmental impacts.

Conservation and reduction of energy consumption must be one of the pillars of an energy strategy. Consuming less energy will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce air pollution and save ordinary Canadians money. Those are all laudable goals.

The second pillar of an energy strategy is to replace non renewable energy sources with renewable ones. To do this our strategy would include actions of course to develop a thriving renewable energy industry in Canada, particularly small hydro, solar and biomass. All of these are possible, all of these are important and all of these can happen in our system.

We need the creation of a crown corporation to assist communities, commercial and industrial interests at the community level, to help create these kinds of energy which are not transported mainly by pipes or transmission lines but really deal with how we use energy at home and in the community.

We need to install 100,000 solar roofs to get our solar energy program going. We are falling behind the rest of the world. Our country has an abysmal record of supporting solar energy.

We need to invest in co-generation. One of the simplest and most fundamental ways that Northern countries save energy is co-generation; use the waste heat that is produced in industrial and electrical processes.

We need investment in sustainable public transport. We need to provide funding to support the development of community groups and non-profit organizations to promote activities which have these values and put these values in front of Canadians which allow small businesses, individuals and community governments to make the best of the energy systems that are available to them.

A gradual transition to a sustainable renewable energy regime allowing maximum use of attrition and ensuring planned decreases in production can be accomplished and save jobs which can provide a reasonable transition to a new economy. However, any strategy for Canada would be incomplete if it did not address fossil fuels. When we talk about addressing fossil fuels I do not think we only want to talk about bringing liquefied natural gas into this country to replace a rapidly declining resource that was so mishandled through the 1980s and 1990s by successive Liberal governments.

The NDP strategy would conduct a complete assessment of federal subsidy and incentives to the energy sector, with input from relevant stakeholders, accompanied by the establishment of a specific timetable for the rapid elimination of environmentally harmful subsidies and incentives, particularly those associated with the oil and gas industry.

I want to say that an energy strategy for Canada must put Canada's energy needs first, not those of the United States, not made in Washington with the North American energy working group giving direction to this country. We need our own energy strategy. We need it in conjunction with the Kyoto plan. Without that energy strategy we will not get to Kyoto. The NDP is not interested in who is at fault here. We are here to do something for Canadians right now.

When we look at the Liberal record over many years on many subjects and we look at the old saying which makes sense here, what is the best indicator of future performance, it is the past performance. When we look at the past performance of the Liberal Party over 13 years it was strictly a sham. How could anyone use the promises of that party in 2005 to judge their relevance for staying in office?

There is the thought that we will come to a solution (in dealing with climate change) in this Parliament and that the four parties working together would take this out of the next campaign when we are in front of the voters. The Liberals want to keep some doubt in this process and I think that is something that is shameful. Let us get on with this and get it done.



Athletes clap and dance to the music at the opening ceremonies of the NWT Winter Games in Fort Simpson on February 15.

Sparking dialogue on an NWT Constitution

On February 24, we hosted a **non-partisan, public open forum** on NWT Constitutional Development. We did this in co-operation with Dene National Chief Bill Erasmus and Yellowknife Mayor Gord Van Tighem. How we govern ourselves is a topic that hasn't been discussed much since the early 1990s, when Nunavut became a territory. With Self-government negotiations, devolution talks and a pipeline on the horizon, we need to start getting serious about setting the rules by which we are governed, instead of relying on external forces (the federal government) to do it for us. Without a constitution, we will be vulnerable to exploitation of our resources. Chief Erasmus said that will result in "a boom and bust economy with project-oriented economics." **For more information, contact our offices.**

Passport blues

Getting answers

Both of my offices in Ottawa and Yellowknife have been besieged by Northerners trying to get their passport applications through the system in time for winter and spring travel plans. This is not unique to the North, although we have our own special problems in the passport system – one that is under tremendous strain right now.

The implementation of the first phase of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative by the United States government, which requires all Canadians flying into that country to have a

passport, has caused the volume of applications received to increase by 50 per cent every month over the past year. This has meant long wait times for passports -- sometimes exceeding two months. Our offices can assist in finding where your application is in the system. Do not hesitate to call if you are in an emergency situation, or if the time before you are scheduled to travel is running short.

I had the opportunity to address the Director of Passport Canada at the Standing Committee on Government Operations on February 22. I spoke to him and his staff about the need for improved services in the North. I raised the issue of picture quality and the strict standards that are in place. They assured me that they will be modifying those standards to give more lee-

way. This has been a particular problem for people in many of our small communities not served by a photographer.

In terms of access, they are considering setting up a travelling component to send their staff into isolated communities at low demand periods to assist with filling out the applications. They are also considering more mail-in service centers across Canada.

It was great to have a chance to bring these concerns directly forward on behalf of my constituents. However, I sense it will be a while before timely service is returned.

Note: *the next surge will likely be in January 2008, when Phase 2 of the U.S. plan kicks in. Also, the busiest time for processing passport applications is January through March. Try to avoid that time.*

Your Feedback

I want to hear from you. If you have any questions, comments or concerns you would like to share, please send them along to me in Ottawa. Letters to your **MP's Parliament Hill office** do not require a postage stamp.
