



# Dennis Bevington

## MP Western Arctic

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### Summer 2010

Dear Constituents,

Parliament starts up again on September 17th; I have the hope that the session can be more productive and deal with many of the issues facing Canadians. The summer time has been one of uncertainty in the world economy, and Canada's fragile recovery from the global recession has shown signs of weakness.

The G8 and G20, those major gatherings of world leaders in Toronto were expensive, controversial and inconclusive. The Harper Government's plans for massive debt reduction worldwide have run into the reality of global need to continue public intervention in the economies.

In the NWT, our economy has been hit to a certain degree by the recession. In talking to small business people in service sectors, tourism and transportation, their bottom line is hurting. We rely on these businesses to make our communities work; your support for them can make a big difference.

With another winter heating season approaching, think of investing in your home heating system. The Government of the NWT offers very good incentives for any efforts taken by you. I will continue to lobby for more Federal support for matching programs. The Conservative Government has really not delivered in this regard.

Your constituency office in Yellowknife and the Members office in Ottawa are there to assist you with any Federal issues from immigration to taxes. Call us at our toll free number 1-800-661-0802 or email [bevind@parl.gc.ca](mailto:bevind@parl.gc.ca), and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

I appreciate your many comments on different Bills in front of Parliament. It shows us what national issues hit home with northerners and helps guide our response on the Hill.

All the best for the fall,

Dennis

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Dennis and his grandson Jonah took part in the annual Canada Day parade in Yellowknife.

Photo by Todd Granter

### My Private Member's BILL C-530

Among the difficulties facing the Northwest Territories in building a better North are the restrictions Ottawa places on the NWT.

Unlike the provinces, the federal government continues to maintain control over vital jurisdictions like natural resources and places restrictions on the territorial government which make it difficult for the GNWT to take actions which improve the North.

One of these federal controls is a restriction on how much the GNWT can borrow. Right now the amount is set by Ottawa and is only increased after much pleading and begging by the NWT. Even more worrisome is that Ottawa could just lower the borrowing level without consulting with and over the objections of the Northwest Territories. (continued on page 2)



**My Private Member's Bill C-350** (continued from page 1)

This control is a colonial hold-over. There may have been a need for such a control in the early days of the territorial administration when Ottawa bureaucrats ran everything. However, since Northerners have taken control of the GNWT they have consistently demonstrated good money management and sound fiscal planning. There is no need for Ottawa to continue to exercise these paternalistic controls.

Many of projects which would benefit Northerners and over the long run would show a positive return for the NWT can't get going because the GNWT hasn't got the ability to direct funds into these areas. One such project would be Taltson Hydro expansion, where because the GNWT isn't allowed to raise the money, southern companies will have to be brought in. Which means these companies and not Northerners will end up owning the resource.

To end this colonial control from Ottawa, I introduced Bill C-530 into the House of Commons on June 10<sup>th</sup> of this year. The bill changes the Northwest Territories Act by setting the GNWT's borrowing limit at 70% of all the money it raises, including any monies from other governments.

For the 2010/2011 fiscal year the estimated total revenue of the GNWT is \$1.357 billion. The current borrowing limit set by the federal government is \$500 million. Under my bill the borrowing limit would have been set at \$950 million and would automatically increase as the revenues of the GNWT increase.

Through my bill the GNWT will gain a vital tool which allows it to invest in infrastructure which is vital to the North and will build a better and more prosperous territory for all.

**Community visits included the 6th Annual Tlicho Assembly which was held in Gameti (formerly known as Rae Lakes) on July 6 - 9.**



Below: Taking a break during the Tlicho assembly, Dennis meets with long time friend Charlie Ekendi, and Elder Narcisse Bishop in Gameti.

Photo by Josh Campbell



In June, there was a Change of Command ceremony for Joint Task Force North. The ceremony was held in Yellowknife. Dennis had a change to meet with Warrant Officer Doug Powder of 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group and the Fort Providence Juniors Rangers (below).

Photos by Heather Oliver



Left to right: Chief Charlie Football, Wekweeti; Tlicho Grand Chief Joe Rabesca; Dennis, Chief Alfonz Nitsiza, Whati; Chief Clifford Daniels, Behchoko; and Chief Edward Chocolate of Gameti.

Photo by Josh Campbell

## National Energy Board Review

Northerners have watched in horror the oil spill disaster in the Gulf of Mexico following the blow-out of BP's Deep Horizon oil rig. BP and other companies are planning on in the Beaufort Sea in the next few years. In response the National Energy Board (NEB) is conducting a review of regulations governing off-shore drilling in the Arctic.

As your federal representative I have registered with the NEB to participate in these hearings. My role will be to ensure the concerns of all Northerners are placed before the board and adequately addressed.

Here in the North we have to balance the need for economic development of our natural resources with the need to protect our fragile environment. A oil rig blow-out in the Beaufort Sea would cause a disaster greater than that in the Gulf of Mexico.

One of the concerns I want to see addressed is the lack of oil spill containment and clean-up capacity in the North and across Canada. For example in the Gulf of Mexico disaster the U.S. government has laid more than 1400 kilometres of spill barriers, Canada has only some 6 kilometres of barriers in total.

I am also concerned that the oil companies want an exemption from having to drill relief wells. A relief well is a second well drilled to intersect with the main well. In case of a blow-out the relief well is used to plug the main well stopping the release of oil. While other technologies exist for stopping a blow-out, relief wells are the only process with a 100 percent success rate.

In the Gulf of Mexico, BP did not have a relief well drilled before the blow-out. Drilling a relief well can take months during which, as we have seen in the Gulf of Mexico, massive amounts of oil will spew into the water.

This spring the House of Commons unanimously passed an NDP motion for the Harper government conduct a review and revision of all relevant federal laws, regulations and policies regarding the development of unconventional sources of oil and gas, including oil sands, deepwater oil and gas recovery, and shale gas, through a transparent process and the broadest possible consultation. Unfortunately the Harper government has so far only committed to a limited and inadequate review by the National Energy Board.

At a July 6<sup>th</sup> press conference NDP Leader Jack Layton said, "The BP spill in the Gulf of Mexico has served as a wake-up call to make sure that we reexamine all regulations and practices to ensure that they are the most sophisticated and up to date in the world. We have to protect workers, the environment and affected communities. That is what Parliament called for, and that is what should happen."

Transport Canada is the federal agency with the ultimate responsibility for oil spill containment and clean-up planning and preparation. In my role as New Democrat Transport Critic I been pushing for a review of our national oil spill capacity at the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Transportation.

While myself and other New Democrats will continue to push for a larger review, I am preparing to put your concerns before the NEB in its review of Arctic off-shore drilling. Please send your concerns either in writing to my office or to my e-mail address [bevind@parl.gc.ca](mailto:bevind@parl.gc.ca).



Relaxing with Jack and Ruth Van Pelt at the annual Pine Lake community picnic.

Photo by Joan Bevington

No Postage required

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## Food Mail Program becomes Nutrition North Canada Program

The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada wrapped up their review of the Food Mail Program this spring. The government concluded the program delivered solely by Canada Post was “not economically sustainable,” ringing in annually around 60 million dollars, and that its 40 year old design did not meet the needs for Northerners access to nutritious food.

Western Arctic MP Dennis Bevington, Churchill MP Niki Ashton, and several Aboriginal leaders, successfully lobbied for changes that would help people living in isolated northern communities.

Assistant Deputy Minister for INAC, Mr. Patrick Borbey described the changes in the new Nutrition North Canada program. “Northern retailers and southern suppliers will make their own supply chain arrangements to ship eligible items to eligible communities, at their convenience and discretion, and pay the full shipping rate they have negotiated with the airline. Northern retailers and southern suppliers will then claim the subsidy from INAC for eligible items shipped by air, as per a pre-determined subsidy rate per kilogram basis, customized by community.”

Smaller Northern retailers were assured by INAC officials that they will continue to have access to subsidized foods, while having the option of ordering eligible foods from suppliers who must be registered with the program and who will be able to claim the subsidy from INAC. Personal orders for individuals will be remaining, to preserve a measure of competition for Northern retailers and provide customers with flexibilities related to dietary needs. Also, food with little nutritional value will be removed from the program as of October 2010. A council will be established to engage in the promotion of nutritious food in the north.

Last year 16 communities in the Northwest Territories accessed the Food Mail Program. According to last year’s review from INAC, the NWT accounted for 5 per cent of shipments, and 3 per cent of the subsidy.

**Check out my website  
[www.dennisbevington.ca](http://www.dennisbevington.ca)**

## New Democrats introduce environmental rights bill

The NDP’s Climate Change Accountability Act was passed in the House of Commons this May. The bill is the first-ever piece of national legislation for climate change, and will make the government accountable to Canadians for action on climate change to achieve practical, science-based greenhouse gas reduction targets.

It gives Canadians access to the environmental information they need to keep their communities green.

More than 130 countries have similar legislation, yet our federal government has fallen behind.

This bill comes on the heels of a major victory in the battle against global warming.

**New Democrats know that our time to act is now. If we don’t take aggressive action against climate change, the consequences for future generations could be dire.**



Peter Nogasak and Dennis on the new road being built between Tuktoyaktuk and the gravel source, eventually to link to Inuvik.

Photo by Joan Bevington

Send us your comments:
