



Dennis Bevington

Member of Parliament Western Arctic

Community Newsletter Fall 2012

Dear Friends,

Following the hottest summer many can remember in the north, the news of the changing ice conditions in our Arctic Ocean is not a surprise to most of us in the North. The impacts of the open water in the Arctic are beginning to be better understood by southern Canadians as the weather patterns changes are causing havoc with their lives. In the House last month, I joined with our Environment Critic Megan Leslie in calling for an Emergency Debate on the loss of Arctic Ice and its huge impact on North American weather. The Speaker chose to decline our request.

Parliament has been busy this fall. The Conservatives have introduced another omnibus bill, C45 which continues the trend established this spring where they are lumping many changes to different laws and then ramming them through the House. You will note in the newsletter that we have finished an assessment of the Spring Omnibus Bill C38, and the complete text of that report is on our website. We will be providing the same for C45 in the future.

We exposed in the House a big concern that many people including much of industry have with the leases issued by the Conservatives in the Beaufort Sea. 9000 sq. kilometres of that region were given to a tiny British Company for hardly any value. They could turn around tomorrow and transfer this

valuable lease to anyone in the world (like the Chinese or Koreans) and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development would have no say in the matter. We are putting forward a Private Members Bill to change this so that the Government would have to grant permission for any lease transfers.

We continue to raise the issues of the cost of living in the North. Unlike southern Canada, our costs for energy are sky rocketing, with fuel oil up 300 percent over the last 10 years. This has driven up all our expenses, electricity, food, transportation, even harvesting from the land. We need better answers than what the Conservatives have offered with their very small increase in the Northern Residents Tax Deduction which was 5 years ago. The Nutrition North Program replacing Food Mail has not been very well received by residents across the north. There is much work to be done here to improve sustainability of living in our communities.

Please continue to provide me with letters, emails and comments when we meet. It remains an honour and privilege to represent the people of the NWT in Parliament.

I have to apologize to our francophone readers of this householder as publishing times have not allowed us to get this translated and printed in two languages. It will be available on our website and we will back in French and English with our next communication.



Left: Former Mayor of Yellowknife Gordon Van Tighem being presented with a certificate by Dennis for his great contribution to his community and the Northwest Territories as President of the NWT Association of Communities.



Right: Gail Cyr, Dennis and Sonny Flett on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Both Gail and Sonny are recipients of the 2013 Inspire Awards for their many years of dedicated service to their community. Also, receiving recognition in Ottawa was Duane Smith of Inuvik for his work with the Inuvialuit and for all Canadians. A special gala event will be held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in February 2013.

How Omnibus Bill C-38 Affects Northerners

Bill C-38, also known as the Omnibus Budget Bill, became law after receiving support from a majority of Members of Parliament in late spring 2012. The bill drew widespread opposition from a wide variety of Canadian individuals, organizations, and current and former parliamentarians. My office has recently produced an analysis of how C-38 will specifically affect Northerners. The full version can be found on my website: www.dennisbevington.ca

Bill C-38 is much more than a simply “budget” implementation bill. It changes 57 existing laws, creates 3 new laws, and eliminates 7 agencies. It changes the rules on a wide range of important issues, ranging from the protection of fish and species at risk, to food safety and employment insurance. While the bill implements some of the commitments the Government of Canada made in its 2012 budget, it also introduces new things that were not mentioned in the budget.

Bill C-38 weakens democratic systems and erodes federal accountability to Northerners in the following ways:

- Gives sweeping powers to Ministers and Cabinet in Ottawa;
- Eliminates oversight of several government agencies/activities;
- Gives the government more control over arms-length agencies;
- Prevents non-profit organizations from being able to advocate on important issues; and
- Eliminates important studies about Northern people and the environment that would help inform decision-making.

Ways that Bill C-38 may impact Aboriginal people and communities in the NWT include:

- Removal of key protections for harvested animals such as caribou and fish;
- Limits to Aboriginal participation in environmental reviews; and
- Changes to the criminal justice system affecting Aboriginal offenders.

The Bill dismantles systems of environmental protection and management that have been built up over many decades. It significantly weakens the federal *Fisheries Act*, endangering the abundant and largely pristine fresh water resources within the NWT as well as trans-boundary watersheds. Bill C-38 also weakens the *Species At Risk Act*, leaving many northern species vulnerable such as boreal woodland caribou, wood bison, the peregrine falcon, and the whooping crane.

Bill C-38 significantly reduces social security for northerners and all Canadians, raising the age of eligibility for Old Age Security from 65 to 67, and reducing Employment Insurance benefits. The Bill also affects labour rights and employment equity. It will likely have the effect of depressing wages for workers across the country.

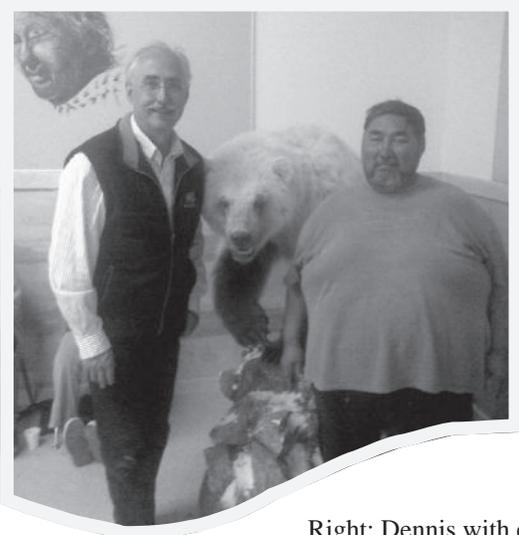
The Bill also reduces federal oversight over food safety and inspection.

Bill C-38 risks hurting many different kinds of people: Aboriginal people, workers, seniors, people who eat food off the land, people who buy store-bought food, and people who care about clean water and environment. It also risks hurting business people by creating great uncertainty associated with the new rules for environmental assessment, and by inviting conflicts and lawsuits. All of these people and groups can join together to make their voices stronger.



Northern Youth Abroad brought young people from the Northwest Territories to Ottawa in June. The Outstanding alumni award was presented to Murina Sabourin of Fort Providence. Also, although not pictured here, Shane Thompson of Fort Simpson received the 2012 Outstanding Volunteer Award.

Dennis in the Community



Right: Dennis with elder Charlie Neyelle who is a recipient of the Diamond Jubilee Medal for his tremendous service and dedication to the people of Deline and the Sahtu region.

Have your say, we'd like to hear from you.

MP Dennis Bevington question on the Navigable Waterways Protection Act in the House of Commons on October 26, 2012

Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives will not have to rewrite history on this question because it is about navigation. On Monday, the Premier of the Northwest Territories stated that his government was not consulted before the Minister of Transport removed the protections from most of the waterways in the north. If the Minister had been consulted, he would have been told that removing the protection from Hay River would also have meant removing protection from the largest port facility in Canada's north. Since the Minister could not be bothered to consult with other Canadian governments, just who did he consult with before acting in such a ham-fisted manner?

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Minister of State Transport)

Mr. Speaker, the navigable waterways act is about navigation. It has always been about navigation. Let me share with the member what other people have had to say. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities said:

“The changes announced today will allow local governments to spend less time processing paperwork for small, low-risk public works projects by removing redundancies, red tape and project delays that result in higher costs for property tax payers”

The Construction Association commented on this. If had time, I could read them. The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities had a fantastic quote. The former premier of B.C., Gordon Campbell, is really thrilled about”

House of Commons Debates Friday, September 21, 2012

Climate Change

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):

Mr. Speaker, this week melting Arctic sea ice set a new record. The U.S. National Snow and Ice Data Center reported that in mid-September Arctic ice covered 3.4 million square kilometres, beating the record set in 2007 when it measured 4.2 million square kilometres.

Scientists are now predicting that the Arctic Ocean will be ice-free in the summer by 2020, previously they had predicted 2050 as the ice-free date.

However, the melting Arctic Ocean is only part of the picture. This summer 97% of the Greenland ice cap was melting. The people of the north are seeing changing weather patterns with high temperatures and unusually strong storms, including the largest storm over the Arctic Ocean this summer.

Three large chunks of ice broke off ice shelves in the Arctic this summer. The largest was a piece the size of Bermuda off the Ward Hunt Ice Shelf on Ellesmere Island.

When will the government recognize the crisis that is rapidly overtaking the Arctic? When will we see action that means something on climate change? What is holding the government back?

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