

Dennis Bevington

Member of Parliament Western Arctic

Winter 2012 Community Newsletter



Dear friends,

Parliament has been sitting since the end of January this year and the results have been less than satisfactory for Canadians in regard to the Government and its policies and proposed laws. I want to thank the many people who have sent in emails and written to me on topics from lack of progress on Climate Change, shutting down research facilities, reducing the Old Age Security benefits, internet surveillance and the "Get tough on Crime Bill". These issues have been fought bitterly in the House of Commons and by the responses I have received from the NWT, very controversial at home. The Conservative Government, with its majority, has been able to shut down debate on the bills that come forth very regularly, in fact more than any other government before in Canada.

As we move towards the budget release scheduled for March 29th this year, I am very concerned with the potential within that document for cuts in funding to be directed to many of the services that the Federal Government provides to Northerners. Already we have seen the Coast Guard facility shut down in Inuvik. As well, Justice Canada will no longer have staff in the Delta area.

We know that Federal scientific research funds are being cut back in the Arctic. Just as we see the incredible changes occurring to our Arctic climate and ocean waters, we are faced with closure of the Pearl research station in Eureka. As well our federal scientists are being silenced on much of the important work they have already done. When I attended the meeting of Arctic Parliamentarians last month in Sweden, I was questioned by scientists from other countries concerned about the Canadian Government's failure to support its Arctic research efforts.

There is much work to be done on Northern issues. I took the time in February to meet with the new Legislative Assembly members in Yellowknife and exchanged information and a desire to work more closely together. I try to meet as well with other leaders from around the NWT on a regular basis and will be on the road in the spring to the different regions.

I trust that the spring will be productive across the north, and you, your family and friends enjoy the great outdoors that is part of all our communities.

Dennis

Protecting the Arctic requires a multifaceted approach

Northerners know that protecting the Arctic requires more than just military might. While the hard working and dedicated men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces play a vital role they can't do it alone.

One of the ways Canada has traditionally protected Canada's Arctic Sovereignty is through active scientific research. Unfortunately the Conservative government has chosen to turn its back on this tradition. This spring one of the leading research centres into climate change will close due to lack of government support. The Polar Environment Atmospheric Research Laboratory on northern Ellesmere Island known as PEARL has been an important centre for high-latitude, high-altitude research and has helped shed light on issues from climate change to the Arctic ozone hole. However it is now being mothballed because the Conservative government does not see what it does as having value.

Another area of Arctic Sovereignty where we need to do more work is in international cooperation. All polar nations will need to work together to protect the Arctic environment, coordinate search and rescue and regulate shipping.

I have been active on this file. In February I met with other Arctic parliamentarians in Stockholm, Sweden at the meeting of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region. There we discussed enhanced international cooperation along with oil and gas development in the Arctic and the effect of climate change on human health. On my way to that meeting I met with representatives of the United Kingdom's House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee which has begun a study of protecting the Arctic environment. I presented them with an NWT point of view.

To be successful in protecting the Arctic we must be prepared to work with others and to help Northerners build a better life. Quite clearly our circumpolar neighboring nations give a high priority to this direction.



Yellowknife Food Rescue program

The program started in 2008, with the help of local businesses and major corporations. Since then, many needy families have been served by this invaluable program. Many local businesses donate food and services that allow the centre to stay open. Volunteers assist in collecting and distributing food throughout the city. They deliver up to 100,000 kilograms of food annually.

Ruby Trudel, is a volunteer who was instrumental in mobilizing community volunteers. Volunteers are always welcome, any help you can offer will be greatly appreciated. People who are interested, can call 867-669-3663.

Featured in the picture are left to right: Henri Beaulieu, Dennis, Jeanette Hall and Ruby Trudel.

Photo credit: Josh Campbell



Gail Cyr of Yellowknife was the recipient of the Diamond Jubilee Medal which was presented to her on February 6, 2012 in Ottawa by the Governor General of Canada, David Anderson.

Photo credit: Leslie Straker

The Diamond Jubilee is an opportunity to celebrate our traditions, history, symbols, values and institutions, particularly about the role of the Crown in Canada. The Diamond Jubilee Medal is a commemorative medal that has been created by the Government of Canada to recognize outstanding contributions of Canadians of all ages and from all walks of life. This medal program is one of the elements of the year-long Diamond Jubilee celebrations that began on February 6, 2012 and continue throughout the year. They also include funding for community celebrations, and a public awareness and education component.

The Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Member of Parliament for the Western Arctic and the Senator of the Northwest Territories have been allocated a number of Diamond Jubilee Medals and are inviting the public to nominate Northerners for this honor.

To nominate a fellow Northerner, contact Josh Campbell, Constituency Assistant at 867-669-8817 in Yellowknife. You can also visit our website www.dennisbevington.ca to get an application.

For more information you can contact:

Diamond Jubilee Team
 Celebration and Commemoration Program
 25 Eddy Street (25-11-T)
 Gatineau, QC K1A 0M5
 Tel: 1-866-811-0055
 Fax: 819-934-1788
 Email: diamondjubilee-jubiledediamant@pch.gc.ca

Around Town in Yellowknife



Winter Walk to Work Week 2012-Left to Right: Aurora College Instructor Kevin Kennedy, Dennis, Jessica Newcombe of CanNor Green Initiative volunteer, and Ecology North member Rose Von Schilling.

Photo credit: Josh Campbell

Contact Dennis:

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The NWT Education Week was held on February 20-24, 2012. The Northwest Territories Teacher's Association (NWTTA) President David Reid, Dennis and Gayla Meredith, NWTTA Coordinator of Member Services in Yellowknife.

Photo credit: Josh Campbell

Below: Dennis Bevington, George Tuccaro, Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, and Jackie Jacobson, MLA Nunakput in Yellowknife outside the Legislative Assembly.

Photo credit: James MacKenzie



Member of Parliament Dennis Bevington question in the House of Commons on the closure of the Canadian Coast Guard office in Inuvik on December 15, 2011.

Dennis Bevington MP Western Arctic:

“Mr. Speaker, another example of the Conservatives’ penny-wise and pound foolish management has come to light. Despite just having signed a long-term lease, the government has decided to shut down the Coast Guard office in Inuvik, the office for the Beaufort Sea and the western Arctic Ocean. The Coast Guard workers have to move to Iqaluit on the other side of the country or lose their jobs. This means increased costs for relocation, as well as the disruption of the lives of these workers. How can the government say that it is a good financial manager when it makes decisions like this?”

Response by Keith Ashfield, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans:

“Mr. Speaker, this consolidation will have no service impact to mariners relating to the provisions of safety, communications and navigational warnings to ships at sea. Mariners will get the same level of service that they are getting today. Most of the impacted staff are not, in fact, residents of the north. The Canadian Coast Guard will be working with them to address impacts of the consolidation”.

Dennis Bevington, MP Western Arctic:

“Mr. Speaker, this poor management will mean that mariners in the western Arctic will have to rely on the Coast Guard office in Iqaluit, nearly 3,000 kilometers and three time zones away. This is at a time when marine traffic is expected to increase in the Beaufort Sea and on the Mackenzie River. Despite having signed a long-term lease and the increased costs of relocating staff, the government is blundering ahead with a move that puts mariners at risk. Is this government’s plan for Arctic sovereignty to reduce service for northerners to help a single budget line?”

Response by Keith Ashfield, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans:

“Mr. Speaker, with today’s technology, it will have no impact on the safety and the concerns of mariners. In fact, concentrating all marine communications and traffic services into one Arctic centre allows for higher flexibility for the Coast Guard to respond to Arctic shopping demands”.

Wise Women Awards 2012

This year’s winners honored northern women who are recognized for their leadership and dedication to their communities. The Wise Women Awards were handed out to Ethel Blondin-Andrew-Sahtu; Therese (Dollie) Simon-South Slave; Greta Anne Marie Sittichinli-Beaufort Delta; Marsha Argue-North Slave, and Margret Vandell, Deh Cho, who was unable to attend the ceremony held in Yellowknife on March 8, 2012.

Pictured in the back row are members of the NWT Status of Women Council, former Wise Women winners and Gail Cyr of Yellowknife.

Photo Credit: Josh Campbell



Send us your comments:

NDP makes history on Aboriginal education

Parliament has passed an historic New Democrat motion solidifying the right of every First Nations child to receive the same quality of education that non-native children do.

For too long, First Nations schools have received less funding than their provincial counterparts. While other students get to go to good schools, First Nations students are treated like second-class citizens.

We see the results across the country in dilapidated schools and unacceptable dropout rates on reserves. We see it in the untapped potential of thousands of First Nations students.

That's why New Democrats introduced a motion declaring that First Nations students have an equal right to quality education—and calling on the government to work with First Nations leaders to end the funding inequality.

Our motion was passed by Parliament with unanimous consent.

The motion was inspired by the late Shannen Koostachin, whose brave campaign to end this funding discrimination was based on a dream that every First Nations child has the right to a quality education.

Shannen became an inspiration to New Democrats and we are proud to fight on her behalf.

Stephen Harper must now take action to end the neglect of First Nations schools and to ensure that First Nations students receive the equal funding they deserve.

New Democrats will ensure he does just that. We will fight to make Shannen's Dream a reality.

**Member's Statement
Dennis Bevington
Protecting the North's Water Resources
House of Commons
Wednesday, February 1, 2012**

Mr. Speaker, in 1996, the federal government, the western provinces, Yukon and the Northwest Territories signed the Mackenzie River Basin Master Agreement. Out of this master agreement a number of bilateral agreements were to be completed, governing the quantity and quality of water moving along the Mackenzie River Basin. Fifteen years later, there are still no agreements.

In Alberta and the Northwest Territories, the lack of a bilateral agreement has meant that the rapid expansion of the oil sands is taking place without proper controls protecting these waters. This lack of control is of great concern to all northerners, particularly aboriginal people, many of whom live along the Mackenzie River.

Alberta and the federal government want to approve more capacity building by quickly approving the gateway pipeline. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Natural Resources want to simplify the environmental process to allow new developments clear sailing through these waters. However, they should assure the people of the north that basic agreements will be in place before the expansion of the oil sands.



Communicate with Dennis on Social Media

“Like,” or send a friend request to Dennis on Facebook, or follow him on Twitter @nwt Dennis.



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Member of Parliament Dennis Bevington and student Megan Walsh from Fort Smith, NT. Megan took part in the Forum for Young Canadians held in Ottawa on February 26 to March 2, 2012. This event allows young people to recreate Parliament for a week. For more information check this website: www.forum.ca

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