

NWT ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITIES

2023 ADVOCACY DAYS

CLIMATE CHANGE



NWT Association of Communities
#200, 5105 – 50th Street
Yellowknife, NT X1A 1S1

Ph (867) 873-8359
Fax (867) 873-3042
sara@nwtac.com



CLIMATE CHANGE

KEY FACTS:

- NWT is witnessing climate change at two to four times the national average.
 - » Rapid warming at 3 times the global average
 - » Significant changes in the natural environment including ice, permafrost, water, vegetation and wildlife
- Fiscal impact of permafrost decay alone on public infrastructure will be in the order of \$1.3 billion.
- Climate Change is causing problems for human health, public safety, food security, infrastructure and economic and cultural activities.
- Buildings and roads in NWT's northern communities rely on year round permafrost.
- Half of NWT's communities do not have all-weather access to the highway system, requiring ice roads, boats, or air for access.

RECONCILIATION AND SOCIAL CLIMATE CHANGE IN NWT

In the NWT, Climate Change isn't a distant, abstract problem – it's here now and NWT communities are at the forefront of the climate change challenge.

The NWT, especially the Mackenzie Valley, is a global hot spot for climate change with average annual temperatures increasing about 2°C since the 1940s when records started to be collected. This increase is even more pronounced the further north you travel; for example, annual temperatures in Inuvik, situated at the mouth of the Mackenzie River near the Beaufort Sea, have increased by 3°C.

The rapid warming, at 2 to 4 times the rate as the rest of Canada, is causing significant changes in the natural environment including ice, permafrost, water, vegetation and wildlife. The frequency and severity of extreme weather events is also increasing. These changes are causing problems for human health, public safety, food security, infrastructure and economic and cultural activities.

Extreme weather conditions shorten the life of many assets in the North, and climate change, which is occurring twice as rapidly than in the south, exacerbates this effect.



CURRENT CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGES

- Permafrost Thaw
- Flooding and Extreme Weather
- Coastal and River Erosion
- Wildfires
- Unsafe Access to the Land
- Human Health and Well Being
- Transportation (ice roads, sea-lift, airports)
- Water and Waste
- Agriculture and Food Security
- Economic Development

FISCAL IMPACT AND FEDERAL SUPPORT

Federal focus on the climate change challenge to date has been on Flooding & Wildfires as that is the primary imminent risks in the south. These are just two of the many climate Change Challenges being faced in the North.

The scale of the Climate Change Challenge in the NWT far exceeds the capacity of the Territorial or local governments to address and will require a considerable fiscal investment by the federal government first to finish articulating the scope and scale of the challenge as well as actually mitigating and addressing those impacts.

The NWTAC has completed a study showing the fiscal impact of permafrost decay alone on public infrastructure will be in the order of \$1.3 billion.

Given the role this region plays in national sovereignty and supporting resource development, these investments should be seen as critical to nation building.



NWTAC RECOMMENDATIONS:

- That the government ensure that adequate funding is being provided to Territorial Governments, Indigenous Governments and Local Governments to ensure that they are well equipped to meet the Climate Change challenges.
- The design of any programs to support climate change in the North must be done in consultation with Northerners to ensure that they have uptake and are effective.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES BY THE NUMBERS

TOTAL
POPULATION
44,469

33 Communities from
Kakisa of **54** residents to
Yellowknife of **20,960**

1,183,000 km²

Official Languages **11**

Residents
who are Aboriginal
50.3%

Homes
without
Internet
20.3%

GDP
\$ 3,745
million

HIGHEST FOOD PRICE INDEX

Colville Lake 2X
Yellowknife

67.3%
Employment Rate

10
of 33 communities receive
telecoms by satellite

1
Senate Seat
1
House Seat

31.7%
Households with Housing
Problem

19.8%
in Core Housing Need