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For Immediate Release

Budget 2018-19 focuses on priorities of Labrador Inuit while balancing fiscal realities

The Nunatsiavut Government's 2018-19 balanced budget will help encourage self-sufficiency and strengthen the health and wellbeing of Labrador Inuit, while encouraging the use and understanding of Inuktitut, improving housing conditions and promoting economic development.

"Our financial plan for 2018-19 will allow us to focus on addressing some of the more pressing needs of our people and our communities, and will set us on a course that will enable us to move forward in advancing self-governance," said Finance, Human Resources and Information Technology Minister Tyler Edmunds in delivering the Nunatsiavut Government's 2018-19 budget today in Hopedale.

Of the \$98 million budgeted for the 2018-19 fiscal year, which begins April 1, a total of \$68.7 million is received under the Fiscal Financing Agreement (FFA), which is negotiated between the Nunatsiavut Government and the governments of Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador. The FFA ensures funding is provided to the Nunatsiavut Government, by the Government of Canada, for the provision of programs and services to Inuit and other persons living in Inuit communities, at levels reasonably comparable to those generally prevailing in communities of similar size and circumstances in Labrador. Other sources of revenue include personal income taxes and Goods and Services Tax (GST), received as part of tax agreements with the Government of Canada, and income earned on investments.

Investments in Housing

The Nunatsiavut Government continues to place housing as its number one priority. More than \$16.5 million has been secured from the Government of Canada during the last two years to assist with dealing with the more pressing housing needs within Nunatsiavut, particularly in Nain and Hopedale. This year's budget sets aside internally-restricted funds of \$10.6 million to implement a Nunatsiavut Housing Strategy, which is expected to be released by the second quarter of 2018-19.

The Nunatsiavut Government provides annual funding to enable Torngat Regional Housing Association to carry out its mandate to provide affordable housing in each of the five Inuit communities. A total of \$2.7 million will be provided to TRHA this year, an increase of about \$100,000 from 2017-18.

A total of \$2.6 million has been set aside from FFA funds for costly subdivision and land development throughout Nunatsiavut.

Implementation of the Nunatsiavut Energy Plan, which was approved in 2017, will begin this year with the creation of a full-time energy facilitator position.

Investments in Language and Culture

A total of \$200,000 has been set aside in the budget to support the revitalization, promotion, maintenance and enhancement of Inuktitut, as well as cultural expression. This funding is in addition to ongoing funding for language programs and services.

Funds have also been appropriated to recruit a language researcher to carry out a language needs survey to gather baseline data on current comprehensive levels, interests, exposure levels and barriers. As well, a best practices assessment will be carried out to learn from other Inuit regions on the best approach to developing a Nunatsiavut Language Strategy. Funds have also been set aside to hold a Language Summit to learn from Labrador Inuit and language specialists from other Inuit regions on how to best address language needs.

The Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism will also develop and implement new cultural programming in partnership with other Nunatsiavut Government departments.

Funding continues to be appropriated for current programs, such as the Inuktitut radio hour on OKâlaKatiget Society Radio, the Inuagguait Language Nest, the Labrador Inuktitut Training Program, the Interpreter/Translator annual workshops, the Inuktitut Master Apprenticeship program, the Digital Outreach and Oral History Initiative and the Labrador Kayak Revival project. Funding has also been set aside to continue supporting Nunatsiavut artists and craftspeople.

The Illusuak Cultural Centre in Nain is scheduled to open later this year. Funds have been set aside in the budget to ensure the completion of the centre's theatre as well as landscaping.

Investments in Health and Well-being of Inuit

Funds have been appropriated in the budget to continue employing a Food Security Coordinator to focus on identifying the causes of food insecurity and to put together a plan to properly address this issue.

As well, the Government of Canada, through the FFA, continues to provide funding so that the Nunatsiavut Government can provide health and social programming related to mental wellness and healing, suicide prevention, diabetes prevention, and tuberculosis prevention and elimination, to name a few.

Investments in Land and Natural Resources

Work has commenced on Imappivut, a marine plan for Nunatsiavut that will protect Labrador Inuit interests in the ocean environment and support healthy ecosystems and the well-being of Nunatsiavummiut. Funding has been appropriated for 2018-2019 to continue to move this initiative forward.

Based on input from Labrador Inuit through the Community Lands and Resource Committee, funds are being appropriated to inspect various sites on Labrador Inuit Lands with potential environmental concerns.

The Lake Melville Baseline Study will continue this year with community-based monitoring of water, fish and seals and associated analysis, as well as an expansion of current monitoring program to include other species within the Lake Melville ecosystem.

“We are confident this year’s budget will help meet our commitments to our people, to ensure they are healthy and self-sufficient, proud of their culture and language and deeply connected to Nunatsiavut,” said Minister Edmunds. “As a Government, we have made sound investments in the past and continue to make significant progress in addressing the issues facing our people. With this budget, we can build on these successes in the upcoming year and continue our vision for Nunatsiavut.”

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