

Northwest Territories Council of Leaders Meet in Yellowknife

Yellowknife (June 13-14, 2023) – Indigenous leaders and leaders from the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) gathered for the Northwest Territories Council of Leaders (NWTCOL) meeting on June 13 and 14, 2023 in Yellowknife, NT.

Leaders discussed a range of NWT-wide issues of mutual interest related to social and economic issues, including:

- Health in the NWT including the federally announced Indigenous Health Equity fund and collaboration to ensure it is maximized for Indigenous Northerners, and challenges with the federal funding of Non-Insured Health Benefits
- Mental Health and Addictions and prevention and mitigation of illegal drugs and collaboration to address these issues;
- Development of the NWT Housing Forum;
- Caribou Management issues;
- Climate Change;
- Economy and Cost of Living; and
- Arctic and Northern Policy Framework

The NWTCOL forum offers members the opportunity to discuss territory-wide social, environmental, and economic issues that are of interest to all member governments and work towards solutions.

The NWTCOL continues to be a productive forum and an example of meaningful partnership between the Indigenous and GNWT leaders, consistent with the principles of reconciliation.

The meeting was chaired by ʔekw'ahtı́dó Danny Gaudet of Délı́nę Got'ı́nę Government.

Leaders attending the meeting included:

- Chief Eugene Hope, Acho Dene Koe First Nation
- Leonard Kenny, Délı́nę Got'ı́nę Government
- Gina Dolphus, Délı́nę K'aowədó Kə Member, Délı́nę Got'ı́nę Government
- Chair Duane (Ningaqsiq) Smith (Anisaluk), Inuvialuit Regional Corporation

- Chief April Martel, Kát'odeeche First Nation
- Chief Steve Vital, Nahanni Butte Dene Band
- Councillor Eric Matou, Nahanni Butte Dene Band
- President Marc Whitford, North Slave Métis Alliance
- Councillor Kendra Bourke, Salt River First Nation
- Councillor Don Beaulieu, Salt River First Nation
- Councillor Freda Emile, Salt River First Nation
- Councillor Warren Sikyea, Salt River First Nation
- Chair Charles McNeely, Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated
- Vice-Chairperson Edwin Erutse, Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated
- Grand Chief Wilbert Kochon, Sahtu Dene Council
- Grand Chief Jackson Lafferty, Tłıchǫ Government
- Chief Clifford Daniels, Tłıchǫ Government
- Chief Alfonz Nitsiza, Tłıchǫ Government
- Chief Doreen Arrowmaker, Tłıchǫ Government
- Chief Adeline Football, Tłıchǫ Government
- Premier Caroline Cochrane
- Minister Diane Archie, Deputy Premier, Infrastructure
- Minister Caroline Wawzonek, Industry, Tourism, and Investment; Finance
- Minister Julie Green, Health and Social Services
- Minister Paulie Chinna, Housing NWT
- Minister Shane Thompson, Environment and Climate Change; Municipal and Community Affairs
- Minister R.J. Simpson, Justice; Education, Culture and Employment

Federal Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu joined the leaders virtually to discuss Health matters in the NWT.

Federal Northern Affairs Minister Dan Vandal joined the leaders virtually to discuss the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework.

Quick Facts

- Strengthening relationships with Indigenous governments is a priority of the 19th Legislative Assembly.
- The *Northwest Territories Council of Leaders Memorandum of Understanding* was signed by leadership on June 11, 2021. The MOU was signed for a four-year term.

- Signatories to the NWT Council of Leaders include: Acho Dene Koe First Nation, Akaitcho Dene First Nations, Délı̨nę Got'ı̨nę Government, Gwich'in Tribal Council, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Kátł'odeeche First Nation, Nahanni Butte Dene Band, North Slave Métis Alliance, Northwest Territory Métis Nation, Salt River First Nation, Sahtu Secretariat Inc., Tłı̨chǫ Government, and the Government of the NWT.
- The inaugural meeting of the NWTCOL was held on June 11, 2021, in Yellowknife, NT and virtually. Subsequent meetings were held November 18-19, 2021, May 20, 2022, September 27-29, 2022 and November 25, 2022.
- The MOU commits the NWT Council of Leaders to meeting annually.

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