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Equity Position in Mackenzie Gas Project

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to speak about the Mackenzie Gas Project. I have spoken in support of this project in the past and I want to stand up here today again and reiterate my support for the project.

Mr. Speaker, I do respect the regulatory process that is at play and look forward to the report from the Joint Review Panel when it becomes available. Mr. Speaker, it may be taking too long for some, but the work needs to be completed. I believe the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline can and will be built in a manner which will minimize the impacts on the environment. It will bring much needed economic development and activity for our communities and the residents, especially in the Sahtu and Beaufort-Delta.

The Mackenzie Gas Project is not without competition, Mr. Speaker. There is much pressure on the new Obama administration in Washington to find billions of dollars in support of a new Alaskan pipeline. I applaud the efforts of the federal Environment Minister, Mr. Jim Prentice, and the federal government for realizing what is at risk. The stakes are very high, Mr. Speaker. The national economy and the economy here in the Northwest Territories could certainly use the investment this \$16 billion mega-project would bring.

I support Minister Bob McLeod and his Department of ITI in their efforts to support the Mackenzie Gas Project. Anything I can do to lend support to this, I would be more than happy to do, Mr. Speaker. In the five and a half years I have been here, I have seen our government spend millions of dollars getting ready for the pipeline. In my estimation, in that time between the positions, the pipeline office and other expenses, it is close to \$50 million. This is a substantial investment. However, our government seems to be the only one without an equity stake in the pipeline. The federal government has stepped up. The details of this are a bit sketchy, but where is our government in all of these discussions, Mr. Speaker?

The pipeline will be constructed down the very heart of our Territory. Mr. Speaker, it is about time we start discussing what the returns will be to the residents here in the Northwest Territories. Like the oil companies and like the federal government are going to get, our government needs to get an equity position in this pipeline. I will have some questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.