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CANADA

ARCTIC SECURITY AND SOVEREIGNTY, AND THE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

**Report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and
Northern Affairs**

Jenica Atwin, Chair

**JUNE 2023
44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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**Jenica Atwin
Chair**

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NOTICE TO READER

Reports from committees presented to the House of Commons

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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has the honour to present its

TENTH REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the committee has studied the Arctic sovereignty, security and emergency preparedness of Indigenous Peoples and has agreed to report the following:

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LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of their deliberations committees may make recommendations which they include in their reports for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Government. Recommendations related to this study are listed below.

Recommendation 1

That the Government of Canada work with Indigenous people to identify capacity needs in the context of emergencies, and that adequate and flexible funding (including advance payments) and other resources, such as training, be provided to address identified capacity needs. 13

Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada, in partnership with Indigenous people, work with provincial and territorial governments and organizations that provide services to Indigenous people during emergencies to ensure that such services are provided in a culturally-safe and appropriate manner. 13

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada provide funding to Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to ensure that infrastructure mitigation projects that have been approved by ISC can be funded appropriately. 16

Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada work with Indigenous communities and organizations to identify additional funding needs for mitigation projects and that those projects be funded accordingly. 16

Recommendation 5

That the Government of Canada prioritize work on multilateral agreements for emergency services and service transfer in First Nations communities, including by providing adequate resources to First Nations to support their participation in the development and implementation of agreements, and that Indigenous Services Canada report its progress to the committee within six months of the tabling of this report. 19

Recommendation 6

That Indigenous Services Canada, in working to support Indigenous emergencies management, ensure that all information from all relevant sources, including other federal departments, is considered in developing a comprehensive emergencies management response. 19

Recommendation 7

That the Government of Canada work with all public alerting stakeholders, in partnership with Indigenous communities, provinces and territories and providers to evaluate emergency alerting approaches to ensure that the needs of communities are being met. 21

Recommendation 8

That as part of the ongoing redesign of the federal Additions to Reserve policy, the Government of Canada, in partnership with First Nations communities and organizations, explore improving the Additions to Reserve process by streamlining the process for communities whose lands are frequently affected by emergencies such as wildfires and flooding..... 22

Recommendation 9

That the Government of Canada, in partnership with Indigenous communities and organizations, provinces and territories, and organizations like the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council, work to improve the capacity of communities to respond to wildfires develop a comprehensive wildfire response that respects and integrates Indigenous knowledge and expertise, including wildfire mitigation practices, and that Indigenous Services Canada report its progress to the committee within six months of the tabling of this report. 28

Recommendation 10

That the Government of Canada, in partnership with Indigenous communities and organizations, identify which communities do not have emergency response plans and provide resources necessary to develop those plans, and that Indigenous Services Canada report its progress to the committee within six months of the tabling of this report. 30

Recommendation 11

That the Government of Canada uphold its commitment to the renewal and modernization of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD); and that it strengthen the capabilities of the Canadian Armed Forces in the Canadian Arctic. 38

Recommendation 12

That the Government of Canada work with Northerners, territorial governments and First Nations, Inuit and Métis to establish a new joint rescue coordination centre in the territories to ensure that the Arctic is better served by the Canadian Armed Forces’ search and rescue assets..... 38

Recommendation 13

That the Government of Canada, recognizing the crucial role played by the Canadian Rangers with respect to security and sovereignty in the Arctic, take all measures necessary to ensure that they can effectively conduct their duties; and that in doing so, the government commit to:

- reviewing and adjusting the Equipment Usage Rate on an annual basis;
- ensuring that members of the Canadian Rangers continue to qualify for and are paid an Isolation Allowance;
- ensuring that the Canadian Rangers receive timely and adequate compensation for their work and personal usage equipment; and
- prioritizing investments in training for members of the Canadian Rangers..... 41

Recommendation 14

That the Government of Canada, recognizing that climate change disproportionately affects the Arctic region, work with northern and Indigenous partners to mitigate and adapt to climate change in the Arctic, notably by investing in net-zero and climate-resilient infrastructure, renewable energy systems, emergency preparedness, and northern research, knowledge and capacity building..... 45

Recommendation 15

That the Government of Canada develop and implement, with Indigenous and northern partners, a long-term plan to invest in northern infrastructure; that this plan be used to better align strategic investments in military and civilian infrastructure in remote and northern regions of the country; and that infrastructure investments in the Arctic focus on community sustainability and socioeconomic development. 48

Recommendation 16

That the Government of Canada, in partnership with Indigenous peoples, Northerners and territorial governments, develop and implement a long-term strategy and vision to assert Canada’s sovereignty in the Arctic; and that such a policy be designed to support reconciliation and to empower resilient and responsive local communities..... 50

Recommendation 17

That the Government of Canada, in partnership with like-minded states and Indigenous permanent participants, determine the best way forward for the Arctic Council considering Russia’s unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine; and that the government work with its partners to facilitate the continued participation of Indigenous peoples in intergovernmental cooperation in the Arctic. 51



ARCTIC SECURITY AND SOVEREIGNTY, AND THE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

Prior to the arrival of settlers and the creation of what is now Canada, First Nations, Inuit and Métis had their own protocols and ways of ensuring the safety of their communities. To ensure proper emergency preparedness in Indigenous communities, and to maintain security and sovereignty in the Arctic, Canada must proactively engage with Indigenous peoples and Northerners as equal partners.

On 29 April 2022, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs (the committee) adopted the following motion:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study on the emergency preparedness to Indigenous Peoples in Canada; including Arctic security and sovereignty for Nunavummiut as it relates to how Northern and especially Indigenous Northern communities will thrive, and be sustainable, resilient, strong and secure; that the committee's study take account the possible effects of wildfire, floods, earthquakes and pandemics for First Nations; that the study include but is not limited to studying the preparedness of the Canadian Rangers and their role in advancing reconciliation; that the study include but not be limited to looking at high-risk flood insurance, programs in place to finance the rebuilding of infrastructure including the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements as well as what steps can be taken now to build resilient communities and on the unique infrastructure needs and challenges in the North; that the committee also study the various partnerships needed for indigenous organizations to have clear communications and partnerships with provinces and territories and the federal government and to lead and take decisions; that all meetings for this study be televised or webcast; that the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House; and that, pursuant to Standing



Order 109, the committee request that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.¹

The committee's study looked at two issues which, albeit interrelated, need their own separate sections in this report. The first section of the report provides an overview of what the committee heard with respect to emergency preparedness; the second part will look at Arctic security and sovereignty.

As part of this study, the committee heard from 43 witnesses and received seven written briefs. In March 2023, the committee also sent a delegation to Cambridge Bay and Kugluktuk, Nunavut, and Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. Observations from that trip to the Arctic are included in the report. The committee wishes to thank all those who participated in this study. As always, this work would not be possible without the contribution of individuals and organizations willing to share their expertise and knowledge with the committee.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Background

While emergencies like floods and wildfires happen across Canada, many First Nations communities are disproportionately affected. The committee heard that limited access to a community due to its remote location, inadequate infrastructure, as well as limited financial, human, and other resources needed to mitigate and respond to the impact of natural disasters and other emergencies, pose a heavy burden on many communities. Effects of these emergency events can be long-lasting and devastating to the physical, mental and cultural health of a community. Karen Hogan, the Auditor General of Canada, who appeared before the committee in the context of *Report 8: Emergency Management in First Nations Communities—Indigenous Services Canada*,² told the committee that more than 130,000 people have been displaced as a result of emergencies in First Nations communities over the last 13 years.³

1 House of Commons, Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs [INAN], [Minutes of proceedings](#), 29 April 2022.

2 Office of the Auditor General of Canada, [Emergency Management in First Nations Communities—Indigenous Services Canada](#), Report 8 in 2022 Reports 5 to 8 of the Auditor General of Canada to the Parliament of Canada.

3 INAN, [Evidence](#), 28 November 2022 (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General).

The testimony relating to this part of the report was heard in 2022. However, at the time this report was adopted hundreds of wildfires were burning across Canada. Tens of thousands of people have been evacuated, and the financial toll has been staggering. The committee acknowledges the extreme hardship that the 2023 wildfires have caused for so many Canadians.

In Canada, emergency management is a responsibility “shared by [federal, provincial, and territorial] governments and their partners, including Indigenous peoples, municipalities/communities and individual citizens.”⁴ Preparedness is one of the four interdependent components of emergency management; the three others being prevention/mitigation, response and recovery. Emergency preparedness is defined as being “ready to respond to a disaster and manage its consequences through measures taken prior to an event, for example emergency response plans, mutual assistance agreements, resource inventories and training, public awareness activities, equipment and exercise programs.”⁵

At the federal level, roles and responsibilities for emergency management are defined in the *Emergency Management Act* (the Act).⁶ Section 6(1) of the Act requires the ministers of each federal department to clearly identify the risks that are associated with their areas of responsibility and to prepare and implement an emergency management plan to address those risks. For the purposes of the Act, Indigenous Services Canada has identified emergency management on reserves as being within its departmental responsibilities.⁷

In the North, the three territorial governments have their own emergency management organizations:

- in Nunavut, Nunavut Emergency Management;
- in the Northwest Territories, the Northwest Territories Emergency Management Organization; and
- in Yukon, the Yukon Emergency Measures Organization.⁸

4 Public Safety Canada, [An Emergency Management Framework for Canada—Third Edition](#), May 2017.

5 Ibid.

6 [Emergency Management Act](#), S.C. 2007, c. 15.

7 Government of Canada, [Emergency management](#).

8 Government of Canada, [Emergency management organizations](#).



Throughout the committee’s meetings, witnesses were clear that prevention/mitigation efforts and emergency preparedness were key to managing emergencies. However, many communities lacked the resources to focus on such efforts, in part because federal funding to support relevant projects was inadequate. Another key issue raised by witnesses was the need to improve coordination between communities, provinces/territories, the federal government and organizations that provide emergency services before, during, and after emergencies. In 2018, the committee highlighted similar issues and concerns in a report on fire safety and emergency management, entitled *From the Ashes: Reimagining Fire Safety and Emergency Management in Indigenous Communities*.⁹

This part of the report focuses on issues relating to emergencies in First Nations communities. First, it discusses the importance of self-determination for communities in the context of emergency preparedness and response, and the need for plans and services that are provided during emergencies to be culturally appropriate. Next, it highlights funding gaps, followed by a discussion of the need for improved coordination. This part of the report then explores prevention/mitigation and preparedness, as well as the need to improve infrastructure, focusing on flooding and wildfires. Finally, it reviews responses to emergencies in communities, concentrating on the need for emergency response plans.

Self-determination and Culturally Appropriate Services

Recognizing the right to self-determination of communities and supporting the exercise of that right is a theme that runs through most studies this committee has undertaken. Chief Joe Alphonse of the Tsilhqot'in National Government explained that “[o]ne of the best ways to ensure preparedness for [I]ndigenous communities is to recognize their jurisdiction in preparing and managing emergency situations.”¹⁰ As Raymond Lamont, Chief Negotiator and Special Projects Lead, Tsay Keh Dene Nation, explained to the committee:

Canada and [British Columbia] have stated that they're committed to advancing reconciliation, that they are committed to implementing UNDRIP [the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*] and to collaboratively recognizing and implementing aboriginal rights and title. The truth is that those promises are empty promises unless [F]irst [N]ations can be empowered to assume greater control over their destiny with the right to self-determination, the right to self-government. Self-

9 INAN, *From the Ashes: Reimagining Fire Safety and Emergency Management in Indigenous Communities* Fifteenth Report, June 2018.

10 INAN, *Evidence*, 26 September 2022 (Joe Alphonse, Chief, Tsilhqot'in National Government).

government without adequate capacity to be an open, transparent and efficient government is an empty right.¹¹

Exercising the right to self-determination in the context of emergencies means that approaches need to be led by First Nations. For Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) communities in northern Ontario, this would include creating a First Nations-led emergency management service, “with the goal to establish and apply the same or higher standards for fire safety and emergency management as you see elsewhere in Canada.”¹² One witness flagged the importance of collaborating on service delivery that was both culturally appropriate and empowered First Nations.¹³ Deputy Minister of Indigenous Services Canada Gina Wilson told the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts (PACP) when PACP reviewed *Report 8: Emergency Management in First Nations Communities—Indigenous Services Canada* that ISC “is working hard towards service transfer”¹⁴ to First Nations. However, she also explained that transfer is taking place at a pace that communities are comfortable with, and that communities “want to be able to take on programs that are working, programs that are funded well and programs that will actually make a difference.”¹⁵

Supporting the exercise of the right to self-determination for some communities includes capacity building, including relating to emergencies management. Mr. Lamont told the committee that:

Tsay Keh [Dene Nation] has always maintained that we don't expect and we don't want the government to solve Tsay Keh's problems. Tsay Keh wants to have the ability to solve its own problems. In order to achieve that, Tsay Keh must build capacity and human resources. It requires capital and funding to build the capability to respond to emergencies and to make its own decisions in its own interest.¹⁶

11 INAN, [Evidence](#), 3 June 2022 (Raymond Lamont, Chief Negotiator and Special Projects Lead, Tsay Keh Dene Nation).

12 INAN, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2022 (Grand Chief Derek Fox, Nishnawbe Aski Nation).

13 INAN, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2022 (Grand Chief Derek Fox).

14 Committee on Public Accounts [PACP], [Evidence](#), 25 November 2022 (Gina Wilson, Deputy Minister, Department of Indigenous Services).

15 Ibid.

16 INAN, [Evidence](#), 3 June 2022 (Raymond Lamont).



In its brief, the Lil'wat Nation, who have “historically faced an emergency situation every few years,” explained that their “ability to respond in a human way to emergencies is extremely limited.”¹⁷

While the Hon. Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, indicated that a program was introduced in Budget 2021 to support capacity-building,¹⁸ and Associate Deputy Minister Valerie Gideon stated that in Budget 2019 there was a specific envelope for capacity development,¹⁹ the Auditor General told the committee that ISC had not identified the capacity needs of First Nations with respect to emergency management.²⁰

Part of self-determination in the context of emergency management relates to Indigenous knowledge and respect for Indigenous ways of doing. Debbie Lipscombe, Executive Director, Grand Council Treaty No. 3 (the governing body of the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3, Northwestern Ontario and Southeastern Manitoba) explained how traditional knowledge and traditions apply to emergency management:

We do operate within traditional laws. One of our primary traditional laws is Manito Aki Inakonigaawin, our resource law, which is very important when we talk about emergency management with respect to floods and fires as well as when we talk about resource revenue sharing from an indigenous perspective.

Within our laws, we have protocols, so when we've had to do evacuations for emergencies, oftentimes our communities want to go west. We have a traditional protocol by which we contact, in Manitoba, the Southern Chiefs' Organization and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. Our grand chiefs talk to their counterparts in Manitoba and ensure that, when we're doing an evacuation that they know that we're coming into the Treaty No. 1 lands. Treaty No. 3 and Treaty No. 1 work together collectively, so that when our members are in hotels in Winnipeg, there is the continuity of the Anishinaabemowin language. Again, because those traditional protocols are in place, we have language and cultural continuity, and we have supports to ensure that everyone works well together.²¹

17 The Lil'wat Nation, [Brief](#).

18 INAN, [Evidence](#), 1 December 2022 (Hon. Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services).

19 INAN, [Evidence](#), 1 December 2022 (Valerie Gideon, Associate Deputy Minister, Department of Indigenous Services).

20 INAN, [Evidence](#), 28 November 2022 (Karen Hogan).

21 INAN, [Evidence](#), 3 June 2022 (Debbie Lipscombe, Executive Director, Grand Council Treaty No. 3).

The committee also heard from Mr. Lamont that relying on Indigenous knowledge, such as controlled burning, may mitigate risks of catastrophic wildfires.²²

Linked to self-determination and respecting Indigenous knowledge is ensuring cultural safety and providing culturally appropriate services when emergencies occur. Shelley Cardinal, Director of Indigenous Relations with the Canadian Red Cross emphasized the need to understand “historical harm and the current challenges that the community is actually facing,”²³ as well as the burden felt when service providers lack understanding of a community’s history and needs:

Too often, when it comes to programs or response, there is a space where the community members have to become the educators to those who are helping with a community challenge. Where community members are needing to educate when they're in a space of crisis, it just adds to the stress with community members.²⁴

The Canadian Red Cross recommended that “[t]he Government of Canada ensure that cultural safety is embedded in strategic planning, policy and program design and delivery.”²⁵ As the Red Cross explains in its brief,

[c]ultural safety is vital: All prevention, response, and risk reduction activities must be done in a culturally safe way. This includes ensuring that no harm is done to the communities we work with, ensuring a holistic approach to programs and services with special attention to physical, cultural, spiritual, emotional, and social well-being, and including traditional knowledge and research data in a respectful way. Cultural safety also recognizes the inherent right to self-determination for Indigenous peoples as communities can identify what is important for their security and protection and preservation of cultural practices. Across operations, the Red Cross aspires to prioritize cultural safety throughout all phases of service provision.²⁶

Lucas King, Director, Territorial Planning Unit for Grand Council Treaty No. 3, told the committee that “[t]he mental, emotional and spiritual impacts of evacuation from your home are absolutely massive.”²⁷ A number of witnesses described how staying close to the community or within traditional territory supports affected communities in a

22 INAN, [Evidence](#), 3 June 2022 (Raymond Lamont).

23 INAN, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2022 (Shelley Cardinal, Director, Indigenous Relations, Canadian Red Cross).

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Red Cross, [Submission to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs](#), 30 June 2022.

27 INAN, [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022 (Lucas King, Director, Territorial Planning Unit, Grand Council Treaty No. 3).



culturally-safe manner, as opposed to evacuations that involve relocating far from home. Chief Alphonse shared his community’s experience with evacuations:

You evacuate communities, and a lot of times they're evacuated to big city centres. Their centres are set up in gymnasiums, cot after cot. This often reminds our people of residential schools. That's not appropriate. The food that's served is not culturally appropriate. It should be culturally appropriate.²⁸

He recommended that an evacuation centre be established.²⁹ The Auditor General found that improvements were needed when communities were evacuated, concluding that ISC “had not assessed the capacity of host communities to be able to support communities that needed to be evacuated.”³⁰ In its brief, NAN recommended that strong ties be established with host communities, and that host communities should have pre-disaster funding available.³¹

Describing what could be seen as an example of a best practice in emergency management, the Auditor General of Canada referred to the Cree community of Kashechewan, Ontario, which, during flooding season, requested and received funding from ISC to move to their traditional hunting area on higher ground. This supported the community in a more culturally sensitive manner than evacuation to another community.³² As the Auditor General’s report on this topic explains, “While they were living on their land, members participated in safe and culturally relevant activities, such as traditional community food harvesting and gathering, intergenerational knowledge sharing, and Indigenous language education.”³³ Ms. Gideon also discussed how going on the land instead of being evacuated elsewhere can assist communities, describing a community in the Northwest Territories for which funding was provided so that they could isolate on the land during the pandemic, rather than being restricted to their homes.³⁴

28 INAN, [Evidence](#), 26 September (Chief Joe Alphonse).

29 Ibid.

30 INAN, [Evidence](#), 28 November 2022 (Karen Hogan).

31 Nishnawbe Aski Nation brief, [Submission to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs](#), 7 June 2022.

32 INAN, [Evidence](#), 28 November 2022 (Karen Hogan).

33 Office of the Auditor General of Canada, [Emergency Management in First Nations Communities—Indigenous Services Canada](#), Report 8 in 2022 Reports 5 to 8 of the Auditor General of Canada to the Parliament of Canada, p. 18.

34 INAN, [Evidence](#), 1 December 2022 INAN (Valerie Gideon).

On-the-land approaches during evacuations can also be more cost effective. Appearing before PACP, Joanne Wilkinson, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister of Regional Operations at ISC explained that, compared to when the Cree community of Kashechewan had been evacuated to host communities, the cost was \$140 per person per day instead of \$235.³⁵ The associated savings can instead be allocated to emergency prevention.³⁶

The committee agrees that the Government of Canada needs to fully support capacity development in First Nations communities to facilitate the exercise of their rights to self-determination. The committee also agrees that services provided in the context of emergencies in First Nations communities need to be culturally safe. For that reason, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 1

That the Government of Canada work with Indigenous people to identify capacity needs in the context of emergencies, and that adequate and flexible funding (including advance payments) and other resources, such as training, be provided to address identified capacity needs.

Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada, in partnership with Indigenous people, work with provincial and territorial governments and organizations that provide services to Indigenous people during emergencies to ensure that such services are provided in a culturally-safe and appropriate manner.

Funding

Many witnesses argued that more funding,³⁷ and in particular increased funding for prevention/mitigation and preparedness activities, was an essential element of addressing emergency management concerns. As Mr. Lamont explained to the committee, “whether it's wildfires or the Finlay Forest Service Road, funding from Canada that Tsay Keh can use to execute the solutions it has developed is critical.”³⁸

35 PACP, *Evidence*, 25 November 2022 (Joanne Wilkinson, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister of Regional Operations).

36 Ibid.

37 See for example INAN, *Evidence*, 26 September 2022 (Hon. David Joanase, Minister of Community and Government Services, Government of Nunavut).

38 INAN, *Evidence*, 3 June 2022 (Raymond Lamont).



The Auditor General of Canada noted that ISC spent “three and a half times more money on responding to and recovering from emergencies than on supporting communities to prepare for and mitigate impacts,” with a total of \$828 million spent on all emergency management activities in First Nations communities over the last four years.³⁹

The committee heard about mitigation-related projects, including infrastructure, that communities wanted to pursue but for which funds were lacking. The Auditor General found that there was a significant backlog of projects that had been approved but not funded.⁴⁰ She noted that the backlog of approved but not funded projects was identified in the Auditor General of Canada’s 2013 report,⁴¹ and that the department “at that time identified that they needed additional funding, and they are still in that situation.”⁴² The Auditor General’s 2022 report on this topic explained that:

We found that 102 structural mitigation projects were either completed (58) or in progress (44). We also examined the department’s database to determine the status of project proposals submitted by First Nations to mitigate the impact of emergencies. We found that the department had a backlog of 72 structural mitigation project proposals that it had not yet reviewed to determine whether they were eligible for funding. The majority (65%, or 47 of the 72) of these unreviewed project proposals were submitted between the 2018–19 and 2021–22 fiscal years.

Furthermore, the department determined that an additional 112 projects were eligible but did not fund them. As of April 2022, 74 of the 112 eligible projects had been in the department’s backlog for more than 5 years, and 4 had been eligible and in the backlog for nearly a decade [...] The department estimated that these 112 projects had a total cost of at least \$291 million. We noted that this was an underestimate because 43 of the 112 projects did not have an associated cost. According to the department, no action was taken on these projects because of funding shortfalls.⁴³

Funding specifically for structural mitigation is \$12 million a year.⁴⁴

39 INAN, *Evidence*, 28 November 2022 (Karen Hogan). Of that \$828 million, the OAG report explains that approximately \$754 million was provided through the Emergency Management Assistance Program, and approximately \$74 million was provided through the First Nation Infrastructure Fund.

40 The Auditor General told the committee that ISC had a backlog of 112 projects. During her appearance at PACP, Valerie Gideon told that committee that the backlog was 94 projects with an estimated cost of \$358 million.

41 Office of the Auditor General of Canada, *Chapter 6: Emergency Management on Reserves*, Fall 2013.

42 INAN, *Evidence*, 28 November 2022 (Karen Hogan).

43 Office of the Auditor General of Canada, *Emergency Management in First Nations Communities—Indigenous Services Canada*, Report 8 in 2022 Reports 5 to 8 of the Auditor General of Canada to the Parliament of Canada, p. 8.

44 PACP, *Evidence*, 25 November 2022 (Joanne Wilkinson).

As mentioned above, many communities have identified solutions but cannot execute them without appropriate funding. Mr. Lamont described this barrier to the committee:

Whether it's the Finlay Forest Service Road or food security, wildfires or pandemic response, we understand the problem and we have developed solutions, but when we are struggling with solutions, we're constantly met with a lack of financial resources and a lack of human resources. We don't have the resources to invest in the human resources that are required to execute on many of the solutions that we've developed. Some of the solutions that we've developed, we've developed collaboratively with industry, or collaboratively with the province, or collaboratively with Canada.

Tsay Keh is currently negotiating an incremental treaty and reconciliation agreement that contains four main pillars, including specific commitments to enable Tsay Keh to develop a viable economy for the Tsay Keh Dene people. The ability to develop a viable economy for Tsay Keh Dene people means that Tsay Keh will have own-source revenue that it can use to help meet some of these needs.

... The challenge we have is that we're struggling to identify existing [federal] programs on which we can draw to help meet some of those needs.⁴⁵

In response to a question, one witness agreed that funding for emergency management should also be aligned with longer term infrastructure needs to support growing communities.⁴⁶ In its brief, NAN recommended that more resources need to be contributed to prevention/mitigation and preparedness.⁴⁷

Ms. Gideon told the committee that ISC funding is based on risk level,⁴⁸ and that ISC works with communities and “listen(s) to them in terms of their determination of their risk level.”⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the Auditor General concluded that more work needed to be done to identify what communities were most at risk and target funding appropriately.⁵⁰

ISC officials did not dispute the need for increased funding.⁵¹ Ms. Wilson acknowledged that there may be items identified as greater priorities than mitigation projects: “Perhaps the community is looking for housing before it is looking to clear up the

45 INAN, *Evidence*, 3 June 2022 (Raymond Lamont).

46 INAN, *Evidence*, 7 June 2022 (Grand Chief Derek Fox).

47 Nishnawbe Aski Nation brief, *Submission to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs*, 7 June 2022.

48 INAN, *Evidence*, 1 December 2022 (Valerie Gideon).

49 Ibid.

50 INAN, *Evidence*, 28 November 2022 (Karen Hogan).

51 PACP, *Evidence*, 25 November 2022 (Valerie Gideon).



eroding shoreline. Those choices come down to very difficult ones for both the department and the community.”⁵²

With respect to improving the process in accessing funding, Ms. Gideon pointed to the success of the Indigenous Community Support Fund (ICSF), which was introduced to support communities during COVID-19:

[The ICSF] has really been a best practice for us. First, it was set up very quickly. Secondly, people did not have to apply for funding. A base amount was given to each community and if communities had additional needs afterwards, they had to apply. I'm talking about an application, not a proposal; it's not the same thing. It was a much simpler process. We continue to operate in this way for COVID-19 support. We are also considering this process for the Emergency Management Assistance Program.⁵³

The committee agrees that infrastructure mitigation projects are key to minimize the effects of certain emergencies in First Nations communities. For that reason, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada provide funding to Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to ensure that infrastructure mitigation projects that have been approved by ISC can be funded appropriately.

Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada work with Indigenous communities and organizations to identify additional funding needs for mitigation projects and that those projects be funded accordingly.

Coordination

Key to mitigating/preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies is coordination between all partners. Coordination needs to happen before, during and after an emergency. As Anthony Moore, President of the Board of Directors for the First Nations' Emergency Services Society explained,

[w]hen it comes to coordination of resources, regardless of which pillar we're in, whether it's mitigation preparedness or recovery and so on, the idea is to minimize the

52 PACP, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2022 (Gina Wilson).

53 INAN, [Evidence](#), 1 December 2022 (Valerie Gideon).

amount of time between when we get the call that they have an incident to where we transition from mitigating the incident to starting to plan for recovery. The sooner that takes place, the better the chances we have of reducing the amount of time that families are displaced from their homes.⁵⁴

Chief Darcy Gray of the Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government shared how coordination during emergencies was important in his community:

We have a lot of capacity in our community, and it is the collaboration and support of ISC and other governments that helps in these times of crisis. I would say that we don't have the ability to have a team on standby or to have people on standby who can react in these times, and it's having that extra expertise or those extra people who can come in, whether it be equipment... We're not so remote, but at the same time, there are still concerns with accessing certain equipment because of where we are.⁵⁵

ISC does not provide all emergency management services;⁵⁶ rather it has emergency management service agreements with six provinces as well as wildfire agreements in six provinces.⁵⁷ Ms. Gideon noted what could be seen as a significant limitation of service agreements, which is that they “do not explicitly state what service standards other citizens of the province can expect and therefore what [F]irst [N]ations can expect.”⁵⁸

Ms. Gideon explained that ISC has eight emergency management service agreements total.⁵⁹ Ms. Wilson clarified that regardless of whether there is an emergency management service agreement in place, “all [F]irst [N]ation communities have been receiving and will continue to receive the help they need to protect their people and infrastructure during an emergency. Provinces and territories continue to protect all citizens in their areas.”⁶⁰

54 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 June 2022 (Anthony Moore, President, Board of Directors, First Nations' Emergency Services Society).

55 INAN, [Evidence](#), 26 September 2022 (Chief Darcy Gray, Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government).

56 PACP, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2022 (Gina Wilson).

57 ISC has emergency management service agreements with British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Prince Edward Island and wildfire agreements British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec. OAG, para. 8.52.

58 INAN, [Evidence](#), 1 December 2022 (Valerie Gideon).

59 Ibid. ISC also has emergency management service agreements with Yukon and the Northwest Territories, Indigenous Services Canada, [Emergency Management Service Agreements](#).

60 PACP, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2022 (Gina Wilson).



Minister Hajdu emphasized the role played by the provinces during emergencies,⁶¹ and Ms. Hogan explained how emergency management is a shared responsibility:

I don't think the onus is only on the federal government and the [I]ndigenous communities. That's why it's so important for the federal government to play that role of bringing together all parties that need to be there, whether they be the provinces, territories or third parties. In some instances, it is third parties, like the Red Cross, that might support responses. That's why it is important to know what everybody's role is.⁶²

The Auditor General of Canada's audit highlighted a shift from bilateral service agreements to multilateral agreements that include First Nations.⁶³ Minister Hajdu emphasized the work undertaken to move towards trilateral agreements, noting progress made in British Columbia.⁶⁴ Some witnesses supported the move towards multilateral agreements.⁶⁵

The importance of coordinating and sharing information with other federal partners was also highlighted by the Auditor General of Canada, Ms. Hogan. Referring to Report 8, *Emergency Management in First Nations Communities—Indigenous Services Canada*, she told the committee that:

We highlighted in our report, in paragraph 8.30, that “We...found that Indigenous Services Canada did not make use of data” that was available “from other sources” that could have been used to help identify those communities that are most in need. For example, we talked about an “Indigenous Emergency Management Capability Inventory” that had been “led by Public Safety Canada and the Assembly of First Nations”. It is really that approach of actually seeking out information, not only from [F]irst [N]ations communities but from other federal partners that might have information to help identify the communities that are at higher risk and of most need. This draws us back to a recommendation we made in 2013 that has still not yet been addressed, and that's why we refocused on that, which is the leadership role that Indigenous Services Canada has to play in bringing all these parties together...[ISC]

61 INAN, [Evidence](#), 1 December 2022 (Hon. Patty Hajdu).

62 INAN, [Evidence](#), 28 November 2022 (Karen Hogan).

63 Ibid.

64 INAN, [Evidence](#), 1 December 2022 (Hon. Patty Hajdu).

65 INAN, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2022 (Grand Chief Derek Fox); INAN, [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022 (Lucas King). See also INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 June 2022 (P. Whitney Lackenbauer, Professor, Trent University, As an individual); Nishnawbe Aski Nation brief, [Submission to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs](#), 7 June 2022.

should consider what other departments are doing in order to have a more global, comprehensive response.⁶⁶

In its 2018 report, the committee recommended “[t]hat Indigenous Services Canada, recognizing First Nations as equal partners, work with them and provinces and territories through trilateral agreements to clarify the various roles and responsibilities regarding emergency management in First Nation communities.”⁶⁷

The 2018 recommendation is clearly still relevant, and the committee fully supports the ongoing work to develop multilateral agreements for emergency services in First Nations communities, and the need to provide adequate resources to First Nations so that they can fully participate in that process. For these reasons, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 5

That the Government of Canada prioritize work on multilateral agreements for emergency services and service transfer in First Nations communities, including by providing adequate resources to First Nations to support their participation in the development and implementation of agreements, and that Indigenous Services Canada report its progress to the committee within six months of the tabling of this report.

Recommendation 6

That Indigenous Services Canada, in working to support Indigenous emergencies management, ensure that all information from all relevant sources, including other federal departments, is considered in developing a comprehensive emergencies management response.

Communication

Witnesses raised the importance of effective communication in coordinating prevention/mitigation and response activities, as well as the need to improve communications infrastructure.

66 INAN, *Evidence*, 28 November 2022 (Karen Hogan). In its 2013 report, the Auditor General of Canada had recommended “6.37 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, working with First Nations, the provinces, and other federal organizations, should take the lead role in clarifying federal roles and responsibilities so that these can be set out formally in agreements with the provinces and in the contribution agreements with First Nations and third-party providers.” p.14.

67 INAN, *From the Ashes: Reimagining Fire Safety and Emergency Management in Indigenous Communities*, Fifteenth Report, June 2018.



Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer, Professor at Trent University, stressed that there were “major challenges in information sharing between departments, agencies and governments, and with local actors,” and that “improved information is a key opportunity space that can be acted upon immediately.”⁶⁸ Chief Gray emphasized that “taking a unified command approach internally and that one contact person at ISC or with other governments” would reduce confusion.⁶⁹

One successful municipal communication strategy was shared by Nick Daigneault, Mayor of Beauval, Saskatchewan:

We made sure that the resources were flowing to the community and that accurate information was being presented and disseminated to the community through social media posts as well as radio spots on our local TV and radio station. We’ve had some very good communication resources to utilize to get that proper information out to the community.⁷⁰

The committee heard about the National Alert Aggregation and Dissemination (NAAD) system from Kurt Eby, Director, Regulatory Affairs and Government Relations for Pelmorex Corp. As its brief explains,

Pelmorex Weather Networks (Television) Inc. is the broadcasting licensee of The Weather Network and MétéoMédia, which are authorized by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (“CRTC”) to provide weather and environmental news and information programming. As part of its licensed undertaking Pelmorex built and operates the National Alert Aggregation and Dissemination (“NAAD”) System which authenticates emergency alerts issued by public officials and disseminates these messages to broadcasters (radio and television), cable and satellite television distributors, wireless service providers, and other parties for dissemination to the public.⁷¹

The committee heard that Pelmorex is exploring “taking on administration of [alerting system] accounts for [F]irst [N]ations that want them, for which we would get direction from the federal or provincial governments or some combination of the two.”⁷² In its brief, Pelmorex explains that:

68 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 June 2022 (P. Whitney Lackenbauer).

69 INAN, [Evidence](#), 26 September 2022 (Chief Darcy Gray).

70 INAN, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2022 (Nick Daigneault, Mayor, Northern Village of Beauval).

71 Pelmorex Weather Networks, [Brief](#), 21 July 2022.

72 INAN, [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022 (Kurt Eby, Director, Regulatory Affairs and Government Relations, Pelmorex Corp).

We believe that there is a jurisdictional and public safety case for better enabling Indigenous communities to directly access the NAAD System and be able to issue alerts to their own citizens through Alert Ready. Pelmorex is prepared to provide NAAD System access to Indigenous communities and manage user accounts if we were to receive the appropriate direction and authorization to do so.⁷³

With respect to communications infrastructure, as the committee has heard in previous studies, many communities have limited connectivity, which hampers emergency response.⁷⁴ Ms. Cardinal, with the Canadian Red Cross, stressed the need for the Government of Canada to improve digital infrastructure for Indigenous and northern communities. She argued that virtual tools can be “an important component in emergency management efforts.”⁷⁵

For example, to help and prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Red Cross was able to support epidemic prevention and control measures using virtual walk-throughs and to provide guidance through virtual Q and As.

We also respond to social emergencies through online psychological first aid training and other virtual supports.⁷⁶

The committee agrees that communication is key to successfully managing emergencies and that services in some First Nations communities are affected by lack of access to broadband. For that reason, the committee recommends

Recommendation 7

That the Government of Canada work with all public alerting stakeholders, in partnership with Indigenous communities, provinces and territories and providers to evaluate emergency alerting approaches to ensure that the needs of communities are being met.

Prevention/Mitigation

Infrastructure

As discussed below in the part of this report that focuses on the Arctic, infrastructure needs in the north are acutely impacted by climate change. For the Shackan Indian Band in British Columbia (part of the Scw'exmx Tribal Council), Chief Arnold Lampreau

73 Pelmorex Weather Networks, *Brief*, 21 July 2022.

74 INAN, *Evidence*, 14 June 2022 (Shelly Cardinal).

75 Ibid.

76 Ibid.



explained the infrastructure challenges posed by their lands, and that they were trying to “get safer land and some more housing:”

[T]oday is about our membership, the loss of land and the costs of repairing it, because of the devastation from the fire causing some of the mudslides and the little bit of damming that's happening within the Nicola River. What we're looking at in the future is for some additions to reserve lands and also some more infrastructure for firefighting, etc.⁷⁷

He told the committee that “[f]or economics or looking to the future, we need to look at other places to live or to move to.”⁷⁸ He explained that in future, they would be looking to the additions to reserve process.

The committee agrees that in some circumstances, access to additional lands can have a significant impact on communities that face continuing emergencies due to the location and condition of their lands. For that reason, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 8

That as part of the ongoing redesign of the federal Additions to Reserve policy, the Government of Canada, in partnership with First Nations communities and organizations, explore improving the Additions to Reserve process by streamlining the process for communities whose lands are frequently affected by emergencies such as wildfires and flooding.

Mr. Lamont discussed the significant issue of the safety of the road in his community, and the need for federal funds to address it:

Like other years, an emergency was declared in 2021 by Tsay Keh because the road was impassable. The community was within days of a food shortage and a lack of fuel for the diesel generators that power the community. Despite all of this, in 2021 the auditor general of B.C. cited the critical importance of the road as the only viable escape route for indigenous communities when natural disasters occur.

To finally address these challenges, Tsay Keh established a solutions table that included the province, industry and the [F]irst [N]ations. Engineering reports and budgets were produced and we agreed on a plan. However, we need \$40 million to carry out critical

77 INAN, *Evidence*, 3 June 2022 (Chief Arnold Lampreau, Shackan Indian Band).

78 Ibid.

upgrades and repairs to the road. We believe B.C. will provide half, or \$20 million, if we can persuade Canada to provide similar funding.⁷⁹

With respect to ISC's support for infrastructure, the Auditor General of Canada explained that:

The annual budget they put aside for structural mitigation is only \$12 million. At the current rate, it would take almost 24 years for all of the 112 projects just to be funded. That is why we made a recommendation to Indigenous Services Canada that they really need to do it differently.

First they need to find out the whole comprehensive picture of what they need. Then they need to look at their mitigation for infrastructure projects. The department receives a budget for all types of infrastructure projects, whether they be water treatment plants, structural mitigation or housing. They have devoted \$12 million under this program for structural mitigation. When you break funding up into buckets like that, it causes these delays.⁸⁰

Minister Hajdu told the committee they are doing more work on structural mitigation, with \$121 million spent on support 103 structural mitigation projects since 2016.⁸¹

Flooding

A number of witnesses spoke about the current or potential impact of unpredictable water levels across the country. Mr. King explained that unpredictable water levels due to climate change led to flooding which caused damage, "leaving communities in Treaty No. 3 with impeded access to food, medical appointments and work. Evacuations and loss of sacred sites to flooding also impacted Treaty No. 3 communities and directly impacted their inherent and treaty rights."⁸² Ms. Lipscombe shared how high water levels were effecting Treaty No. 3 communities:

Currently, Grassy Narrows First Nation has been evacuated to Thunder Bay, and many other communities are partially evacuated and sheltering in alternative locations. Many Treaty No. 3 communities are also experiencing continued erosion, loss of land and infrastructure loss, such as our water treatment plant in Wabauskang. Several communities are likely to lose houses along the shoreline and even suffer intense

79 INAN, *Evidence*, 3 June 2022 (Raymond Lamont).

80 INAN, *Evidence*, 28 November 2022 (Karen Hogan).

81 INAN, *Evidence*, 1 December 2022 (Hon. Patty Hajdu).

82 INAN, *Evidence*, 3 October 2022 (Lucas King).



damage to critical band infrastructure. The destruction of these homes comes on the heels of the current housing crisis.

In order to work proactively, Treaty No. 3 is currently undertaking GIS mapping of emergency areas and resources, and taking on flood vulnerability studies to inform future planning and water regulation. Evacuations of communities and people can be incredibly difficult for a community, and we are now operating in the second year of large evacuations.⁸³

Unpredictable water levels due to climate change will also potentially affect the Atikamekw of Manawan in Quebec, leading to evacuation and possible relocation.⁸⁴

The risk of flooding is not only exacerbated due to climate change, as the Lil'wat Nation in British Columbia explains in its brief:

The Nation's reserve land base has been impacted by diking of upstream areas through what is now referred to as the Pemberton Meadows. This process to "straighten the river, lower the lake" has had significant negative impact on the Nation, as it has borne the brunt of flooding impacts.

This is an unacceptable transfer of risk.⁸⁵

For communities in the Northwest Territories, Chief Executive Officer for the Northwest Territories Association of Communities, Sara Brown, pointed to the importance of coordination and information relating to flooding:

We should have a working table of everybody who has a flood risk, so they can learn from each other. They can identify knowledge gaps. They can identify engineering gaps. They can then go look for funding as a group and try to start addressing those issues, but when we leave communities to just struggle on their own with individual risks or a collective of risks... These are already people who are extremely tapped out. Many of them work 80 to 90 hours a week. We have huge turnover, all those things, so we definitely have to do a better job of supporting them and doing the mitigation that will reduce the impacts of these natural disasters.⁸⁶

83 INAN, *Evidence*, 3 June 2022 (Debbie Lipscombe).

84 INAN, *Evidence*, 3 June 2022 (Chief Paul-Émile Ottawa, Atikamekw Council of Manawan).

85 The Lil'wat Nation, *Brief*.

86 INAN, *Evidence*, 7 June 2022 (Sara Brown, Chief Executive Officer, Northwest Territories Association of Communities).

While Chief Gray described the strength with which his community handled flooding in 2018, including support from ISC, they faced significant barriers in repairing homes afterwards:

After the initial crisis response, assessments were done by a third party project management firm. Approximately 55 homes had been identified and assessed for repairs because of the flooding. ... The instructions received at this time from emergency management were to get things moving and get things done as quickly as possible and to build back better. We hired teams to clean and clear out the basements that had flooded. We documented, tracked and supported to the best of our collective ability. We moved and we got things done.

After several months the project shifted within the ISC regional office from emergency management to infrastructure. The switch brought new criteria to determine which houses qualified for repair, now limited specifically to homes that flooded because of the increased groundwater levels that occurred in the spring of 2018. The new criteria reduced the number of qualifying homes to about 40; however, we had already cleared out most if not all the homes identified in the first assessment. We needed an answer for those 15 homes.

LMG Capital and Infrastructure worked with ISC infrastructure to find a solution, and ISC agreed to cover the cost of repairs but not of the cause of the flooding, thereby creating a problematic gap—the basements would flood again if we could not address the main cause. Our capital and infrastructure team found solutions to this gap and addressed the causes of flooding for the remaining homes as well. We completed the various phases of the remediation efforts in 2020, and none of the homes have flooded again, but we hold our breath every spring while we monitor closely.

These events and efforts placed tremendous stress on the staff intervening and on the families affected. ...⁸⁷

He also explained that “what would be really important would be knowing clearly up front what those criteria would or wouldn't be.”⁸⁸

Wildfires

With respect to wildfires, the committee made the following recommendation in its 2018 report:

That Indigenous Services Canada support local collaboration efforts between First Nation and non-First Nation communities to identify a systematic approach to ensuring

87 INAN, *Evidence*, 26 September 2022 (Chief Darcy Gray).

88 Ibid.



First Nations expertise and knowledge of lands and fire behaviour is shared with emergency service providers during and leading up to a response.⁸⁹

The committee heard that factors such as “remoteness, lack of a wildfire response capability, large swathes of dead and dying timber caused by infestations and poor forest management practices” can make a community particularly vulnerable to wildfires.⁹⁰

When he appeared before the committee, John McKearney, President and Fire Chief with the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs described the First Nations Fire Protection Strategy:

It outlines priorities and specific goals framed within six areas—one, partnership with the first nations leadership and fire protection; two, fire prevention education; three, community standards; four, fire service operation standards; five, climate change; and, finally, six, critical infrastructure. This is a thoughtful and well-conceived strategy that focuses on education for [I]ndigenous leaders. They are the ones who make the decisions and allocate resources in their communities. If they are aware and empowered, they will make the right decisions. The strategy also links fire safety and disaster risk reduction, which creates economies of scale. It calls for the implementation of FireSmart strategies, which are essential given the increasing climate issues.⁹¹

Mr. McKearney flagged a number of issues relating to managing fires more generally, including relying on volunteers and the need for training.⁹² The organization has proposed that “a structure similar to the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Fire Administration be implemented in Canada.”⁹³ He noted that collaborating with Indigenous people on that initiative would be essential. Explaining the link between wildfires and structure fires, he explained:

It's trying to connect the dots between wildfires, which are a provincial responsibility, and structure fires, which are municipal responsibilities. Having oversight by the national body, by the federal government, to have consistent training as it relates to the wild-urban interface fire—which is different from a house fire and different from a structure fire—and equipment in readiness in our communities are key.⁹⁴

89 INAN, *From the Ashes: Reimagining Fire Safety and Emergency Management in Indigenous Communities*, Fifteenth Report, June 2018.

90 INAN, *Evidence*, 3 June 2022 (Raymond Lamont).

91 INAN, *Evidence*, 10 June 2022 (John McKearney, President and Fire Chief, Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs).

92 Ibid.

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid.

While First Nations communities seek to manage fire-related emergencies, many lack capacity to do so. Mr. Lamont explained to the committee:

Sadly, Tsay Keh is woefully unprepared and ill-equipped to respond to wildfires when they occur and accordingly Tsay Keh is anxious to develop its own wildfire monitoring and response capability. This role is not only vital to Tsay Keh Dene's safety and security and consistent with UNDRIP and efforts to advance reconciliation, but it also recognizes Tsay Keh's inherent role as a steward of the lands and resources in its territory. The challenge for Tsay Keh is in securing resources for training and equipment. We ask for assistance in securing the resources needed to incrementally develop a wildfire response capability and in doing so mitigate the growing risk to the community and its residents from wildfire.⁹⁵

Chief Ottawa explained the potential danger to his community:

In Manawan, we are surrounded by forest. The slightest spark could burn trees in the area, as well as our homes. Our fire department would not be able to save anything. We have only a handful of volunteer firefighters and we don't even have a truck with a ladder. If our school caught fire with the students inside, the firefighters couldn't rescue those trapped on the second floor.

And because the road is bad and unpaved in places, we would not necessarily have the help of emergency services from outside, given the difficulties associated with transportation. Actually, if it rains too much, sections can be washed away. If it is too hot, the dust makes travel difficult.

Evacuating injured or disabled people would be another problem if such a disaster were to occur, as we only have one ambulance on site. If many of us had to be evacuated at the same time for our health, it would be a real logistical and health disaster.⁹⁶

Similar to the challenges Chief Gray described to the committee after a flood devastated many houses, Chief Ottawa indicated that the Manawan Atikamekw Council faced significant challenges being reimbursed by the federal government for equipment it had to purchase to fight fires when provincial and municipal resources were not available to support their community.⁹⁷ Chief Alphonse explained that Tsilhqot'in Nation had to turn to the courts to be reimbursed for expenses incurred in relation to fires in 2017.⁹⁸

95 INAN, *Evidence*, 3 June 2022 (Raymond Lamont).

96 INAN, *Evidence*, 3 June 2022 (Chief Paul-Émile Ottawa).

97 Ibid.

98 INAN, *Evidence*, 26 September (Chief Joe Alphonse).



As explained in Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation’s (ACFN) brief, wildfires can also impact treaty rights:

ACFN has lived under the constant threat of wildfires throughout the dry season. Wildfires have impacted our ability to live, hunt, fish, gather plants and navigate the region. These rights, which have been guaranteed to us under Treaty 8, are becoming increasingly more difficult to exercise due to climate change.⁹⁹

To a lesser extent than wildfires, housefires were also raised during the study, with witnesses noting the importance of smoke detectors and structures being built to code to mitigate fires.¹⁰⁰ Housefires were considered more in depth in the committee’s 2018 report, and were also referred to in the committee’s 2022 report, *The Effects of the Housing Shortage on Indigenous Peoples in Canada*.¹⁰¹

The committee agrees that improving responses to wildfires is essential for Indigenous communities. For that reason, echoing its 2018 report, the committee recommends

Recommendation 9

That the Government of Canada, in partnership with Indigenous communities and organizations, provinces and territories, and organizations like the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council, work to improve the capacity of communities to respond to wildfires develop a comprehensive wildfire response that respects and integrates Indigenous knowledge and expertise, including wildfire mitigation practices, and that Indigenous Services Canada report its progress to the committee within six months of the tabling of this report.

Preparedness: Emergency Response Plans

The importance of emergency response plans, and the lack of plans in many communities, was highlighted by various witnesses. Similar testimony was also heard during the study that led to the committee’s 2018 report. In that report, the committee made the following recommendation:

That Indigenous Services Canada, in cooperation with First Nations, review its Emergency Management Assistance Program to ensure that funding provided addresses

99 Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, *Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs (INAN) in support of the study on Arctic Sovereignty, Security and Emergency Preparedness of Indigenous Peoples*, October 2022.

100 INAN, *Evidence*, 10 June 2022 (John McKearney); INAN, *Evidence*, 7 June 2022 (Grand Chief Derek Fox).

101 INAN, 3rd Report, *The Effects of the Housing Shortage on Indigenous Peoples in Canada*, June 2022.

the actual needs of First Nations; that in so doing, the department also ensure that sufficient funding is allocated for emergency preparedness activities, such as developing, updating and implementing emergency response plans.¹⁰²

As Michael McKay, Director, Housing and Infrastructure for Nishnawbe Aski Nation explained,

a lot of times, an emergency event lands on the chief and council. Everything lands on the chief and council—emergencies and any sorts of phone calls. What we're proposing with what we submitted today is for investments in an emergency management service that can oversee and deliver a community emergency preparedness program to have on file and to update ongoing community emergency management plans.¹⁰³

The Auditor General found that many communities did not have a plan, and some of the existing plans were “long outdated.”¹⁰⁴ Marcia Mirasty, Senior Director of Health for Meadow Lake Tribal Council pointed to the need to continually update plans, including contacts.¹⁰⁵ Some plans can involve multiple agencies.¹⁰⁶

The Auditor General concluded that ISC’s action on First Nations emergency response plans was lacking:

The department was unaware if every community actually had an emergency response plan, and then when they did receive response services, they weren't monitoring whether they were timely, culturally sensitive and met the needs of the communities. Did they meet more than just the physical needs of coming in and moving individuals? Did they meet the mental health needs and the ongoing health and education needs?¹⁰⁷

The committee heard from Anthony Moore, President of the Board of Directors for the First Nations' Emergency Services Society (FNESS), that FNESS has been trying to work with communities that do not have an emergency response plan, as well as provide other supports such as wildfire training mitigation.¹⁰⁸

102 INAN, *From the Ashes: Reimagining Fire Safety and Emergency Management in Indigenous Communities* Fifteenth Report, June 2018.

103 INAN, *Evidence*, 7 June 2022 (Michael McKay, Director, Housing and Infrastructure, Nishnawbe Aski Nation).

104 INAN, *Evidence*, 28 November 2022 (Karen Hogan).

105 INAN, *Evidence*, 21 June 2022 (Marcia Mirasty, Senior Director, Health, Meadow Lake Tribal Council).

106 INAN, *Evidence*, 3 October 2022 (Sarah Sunday-Diabo, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne).

107 INAN, *Evidence*, 28 November 2022 (Karen Hogan).

108 INAN, *Evidence*, 10 June 2022 (Anthony Moore).



Emergency management coordinators also play an important role in emergency management,¹⁰⁹ and the Auditor General noted that ISC had funded about 190 full-time and part-time emergency management coordinators. However, the Auditor General noted that ISC “wasn't aware of which communities were still missing that coordination role.”¹¹⁰

Ms. Cardinal, from the Canadian Red Cross, recommended “[t]he Government of Canada better support Indigenous leaders in preparedness, risk reduction including adaptation, and response activities to climate-driven disasters and social emergencies.”¹¹¹

The committee agrees that emergency response plans are essential to managing emergencies. For that reason, as it did in its 2018 report, the committee recommends

Recommendation 10

That the Government of Canada, in partnership with Indigenous communities and organizations, identify which communities do not have emergency response plans and provide resources necessary to develop those plans, and that Indigenous Services Canada report its progress to the committee within six months of the tabling of this report.

109 INAN, [Evidence](#), 1 December 2022 (Valerie Gideon); INAN, [Evidence](#), 3 June 2022 (Debbie Lipscombe).

110 INAN, [Evidence](#), 28 November 2022 (Karen Hogan).

111 INAN, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2022 (Shelly Cardinal).

Figure 1—Members of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs visited the Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories



Source: Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs

ARCTIC SECURITY AND SOVEREIGNTY

Security and sovereignty in the Arctic were central themes of this study. The concept of “security” is about addressing potential threats and harms. “Sovereignty” relates to a country’s ability to maintain control and initiative over the land and sea, and people, within its jurisdiction. Throughout this study, several witnesses emphasized how crucial it is to put Indigenous peoples and Northerners at the forefront of the security and



sovereignty policy agenda in the Arctic.¹¹² The Hon. Richard Mostyn, Minister of Community Service, Government of Yukon, said that “Arctic security and sovereignty should, at its core, be about the people of the north.”¹¹³ Witnesses highlighted the importance of self-government and autonomy, as well as the resiliency and know-how of Northerners and Indigenous peoples.¹¹⁴

The following sections highlight the testimony heard on security and sovereignty in the Arctic. It also provides an overview of what the committee heard with respect to the Arctic Council, the intergovernmental forum for cooperation in the region. Following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the other members of the Arctic Council only participated in meetings not involving Russia, as it held the Council’s presidency between 2021 and 2023.

Arctic Security

The committee heard about several security threats related to the Canadian Arctic. However, it also heard that “security” can mean different things to Northerners than in southern parts of Canada.¹¹⁵ Arctic security is about more than preparing for conventional military threats; it is also about “building sovereignty, strong resilient people, and communities,” which can be “achieved through significant investment in critical infrastructure like roads, telecommunications and energy.”¹¹⁶

Nonetheless, risks to Arctic security include conventional military threats. The committee heard about the unlikely, but real “possibility of a limited nuclear exchange.”¹¹⁷ As noted above, though, threats in the Arctic are not merely military in nature. Witnesses highlighted several other threats, such as the “existential threat” of

112 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 June 2022 (P. Whitney Lackenbauer); INAN, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2022 (Hon. Shane Thompson, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Government of the Northwest Territories); INAN, [Evidence](#), 21 June 2022 (Ken Coates, Professor and Canada Research Chair in Regional Innovation, Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Saskatchewan, As an individual).

113 INAN, [Evidence](#), 21 June 2022 (Hon. Richard Mostyn, Minister of Community Services, Government of Yukon).

114 INAN, [Evidence](#), 21 June 2022 (Ken Coates); INAN, [Evidence](#), 26 September 2022 (Hon. David Joanásie).

115 INAN, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2022 (Christian Leuprecht, Professor, Royal Military College of Canada, As an individual).

116 INAN, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2022 (Hon. Shane Thompson).

117 INAN, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2022 (Robert Huebert, Associate Professor, University of Calgary, As an individual).

climate change,¹¹⁸ concerns related to the activities of foreign scientists,¹¹⁹ foreign direct investments from states hostile to Canada's interests¹²⁰ and threats to human security (for example, food insecurity).¹²¹

Dr. Lackenbauer described how he sees Arctic security: "the framework that I typically employ to conceptualize Arctic threats is one that differentiates between threats that pass through the Arctic, threats to the Arctic itself and then threats originating in our Arctic."¹²² Examples of threats in the Arctic include "humanitarian and environmental emergencies caused or exacerbated by climate change." Threats to the Arctic include military threats and threats passing through the Arctic are those passing over the region to "strike at targets outside the Arctic."¹²³

When discussing state actors, witnesses referred specifically to Russia and China. One witness argued that "Russia is likely to remain hawkish in pressing its sovereignty claims [in the Arctic]."¹²⁴ Richard Shimooka, Senior Fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, noted that "Russia's ambition is to provide at least a strong presence in the north to assert its sovereignty, which includes contested claims with Canada."¹²⁵ However, Russia and China do not necessarily represent direct military threats to the Canadian Arctic; rather, the threats they pose are economic and strategic in nature.¹²⁶

118 INAN, *Evidence*, 7 June 2022 (Robert Huebert); INAN, *Evidence*, 10 June 2022 (P. Whitney Lackenbauer); INAN, *Evidence*, 26 September 2022 (Heather Nicol, Director, School for the Study of Canada, Trent University, As an individual).

119 INAN, *Evidence*, 10 June 2022 (P. Whitney Lackenbauer).

120 Ibid.

121 Agnico Eagle Mines Limited, *Brief on the study of Arctic Sovereignty, Security and Emergency Preparedness of Indigenous Peoples*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, 2022.

122 INAN, *Evidence*, 10 June 2022 (P. Whitney Lackenbauer).

123 Ibid.

124 INAN, *Evidence*, 7 June 2022 (Richard Shimooka, Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, As an individual).

125 Ibid.

126 INAN, *Evidence*, 10 June 2022 (P. Whitney Lackenbauer).



Figure 2—Members of the committee visit the North Warning System in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut



Source: Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs

The Canadian Armed Forces in the Arctic

As part of its study, the committee visited the headquarters of the Canadian Armed Forces' (CAF) Joint Task Force North (JTFN) in Yellowknife. JTFN covers all three territories and leads northern operations for CAF, such as Operation NANOOK.¹²⁷ The CAF sees its role in the Arctic as demonstrating a visible and persistent presence, conducting surveillance and control activities, supporting Northern peoples and communities, and contributing to whole-of-government cooperation, among others.

During the study, witnesses spoke about the critical roles the CAF and the North Warning System (NWS) play in terms of ensuring security in the Arctic. Specifically, given

127 Government of Canada, [Operation NANOOK](#).

that military threats to the continent would likely affect the Canadian Arctic, Dr. Robert Huebert, Associate Professor at the University of Calgary, stressed the need to “take NORAD [North American Aerospace Defense Command] renewal seriously. We have, in terms of our detection system and radar, 1985 technology. We need over-the-horizon radar systems. We need an improvement in our satellite capabilities.” He continued: “We also have to show the Americans that we are serious... American political leadership may see us as a ‘freeloader.’”¹²⁸

During its trip to the Arctic in March 2023, the committee visited the NWS in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut. The NWS is a defence system that comprises Canada’s contribution to North American defence and NORAD,¹²⁹ a joint effort of both Canada and the United States. Built between 1986 and 1992, the NWS is a chain of 50 short and long-range radar stations that provide surveillance of the northern regions of Canada and the United States, from Alaska to Goose Bay, Labrador. The radar stations detect airborne objects within the area of radar coverage, about 5,000 km across the northern and Arctic regions of Canada.

The NWS facility in Cambridge Bay is controlled by the CAF, but Inuit-owned Nasittuq has been awarded the contract to provide service and maintenance. During its visit, the committee learned that the NWS is nearing the end of its life cycle, which could be extended between 7 and 15 years, depending on the maintenance work completed. Importantly, the technology has not kept pace with new potential threats and modern weapons technology. As part of NORAD modernization,¹³⁰ the NWS will be supplemented by a new Northern Approaches Surveillance system.¹³¹

128 INAN, *Evidence*, 7 June 2022 (Robert Huebert).

129 The [North American Aerospace Defense Command](#) describes itself as “a United States and Canada bi-national organization charged with the missions of aerospace warning, aerospace control and maritime warning for North America. Aerospace warning includes the detection, validation, and warning of attack against North America whether by aircraft, missiles, or space vehicles, through mutual support arrangements with other commands. Aerospace control includes ensuring air sovereignty and air defense of the airspace of Canada and the United States.”

130 In 2021, Canada and the United States [jointly announced](#) the modernization of the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD). The objective is to “[m]odernize, improve, and better integrate the capabilities required for NORAD to maintain persistent awareness and understanding of potential threats to North America in the aerospace and maritime domains, to deter acts of aggression against North America, to respond to aerospace threats quickly and decisively when required, and to provide maritime warning consistent with the NORAD Agreement.”

131 In June 2022, the federal government announced a [multi-billion initiative](#) over two decades to support the modernization of the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD). The new Northern Approaches Surveillance system (NASS) will supplement the outdated North Warning System. The two components of the NASS are [scheduled](#) to be fully operational by 2031 and 2033.



Figure 3—Members of the committee visit Joint Task Force North’s headquarters in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories



Source: Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs

According to Dr. Ken Coates, Professor and Canada Research Chair in Regional Innovation, Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Saskatchewan, Canada does “not have a very strong military presence in the north.”¹³² He stated that “[w]e need to northernize our armed forces. We do not have armed forces that are really well prepared to work in the north at all.”¹³³ In his view, the CAF are not prepared for new challenges facing the Arctic. However, he was hopeful that NORAD modernization could address some of the existing issues facing the military in the region.

Dr. Heather Exner-Pirot, Senior Fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, was also of the view that modernizing NORAD could be beneficial for the region. She hoped that

132 INAN, *Evidence*, 21 June 2022 (Ken Coates).

133 Ibid.

“northern [I]ndigenous communities and businesses will benefit economically from the investments being made and be included in the civilian decision-making processes.”¹³⁴

Mr. Shimooka also argued that CAF capabilities in the Arctic need to be strengthened:

Canada's capabilities in the north are growing, but significant deficiencies remain. The recent announcements on defence spending specifically targeted towards northern security and modernizing NORAD are welcome, but these address only certain challenges, and it is far from certain that they'll be deployed under the current estimated timelines and costs.¹³⁵

On the Navy specifically, Mr. Shimooka indicated that

ongoing acquisitions of the Harry DeWolf class ships will be an excellent addition to Canada's northern presence. These vessels will assist in increasing the country's northern presence and make major strides in providing a wide range of capabilities to coastal communities above the Arctic Circle.¹³⁶

With respect to aircrafts, Mr. Shimooka said that the CC-295 Kingfisher, the new fixed-wing search and rescue fleet of the Royal Canadian Air Force, “has numerous technical and performance deficiencies that make it unlikely to enter service in its intended role.”¹³⁷ The CC-295 is set to replace the CC-115 Buffalo and CC-130H Hercules aircrafts in search and rescue operations.

While visiting the Arctic, the committee heard that CAF search and rescue assets in the Arctic are located a five-to-six-hour flight away from Cambridge Bay, Nunavut.¹³⁸ Witnesses with whom the committee met in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, recommended that some equipment and resources be based out of a new joint rescue coordination centre in Inuvik or Yellowknife to better serve the Northwest Territories and Western Nunavut.

Dr. Christian Leuprecht, Professor, Royal Military College of Canada, noted that

it is important for us to have surveillance and intervention capacities... and the ability to enforce those. We can't always rely on our U.S. neighbour, because, as we know, their

134 INAN, [Evidence](#), 26 September 2022 (Heather Exner-Pirot, Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute).

135 INAN, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2022 (Richard Shimooka).

136 Ibid.

137 Ibid.

138 The search and rescue assets of the Royal Canadian Air Force are located in Trenton, Ontario ([8 Wing Trenton](#)), Gander, Newfoundland and Labrador ([9 Wing Gander](#)), Greenwood, Nova Scotia ([14 Wing Greenwood](#)) and Comox, British Columbia ([19 Wing Comox](#)).



security resources are in very high demand these days. We need to make sure we have our own assets and the capability to assert our interests and the interests of our northern co-citizens.¹³⁹

Based on the testimony, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 11

That the Government of Canada uphold its commitment to the renewal and modernization of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD); and that it strengthen the capabilities of the Canadian Armed Forces in the Canadian Arctic.

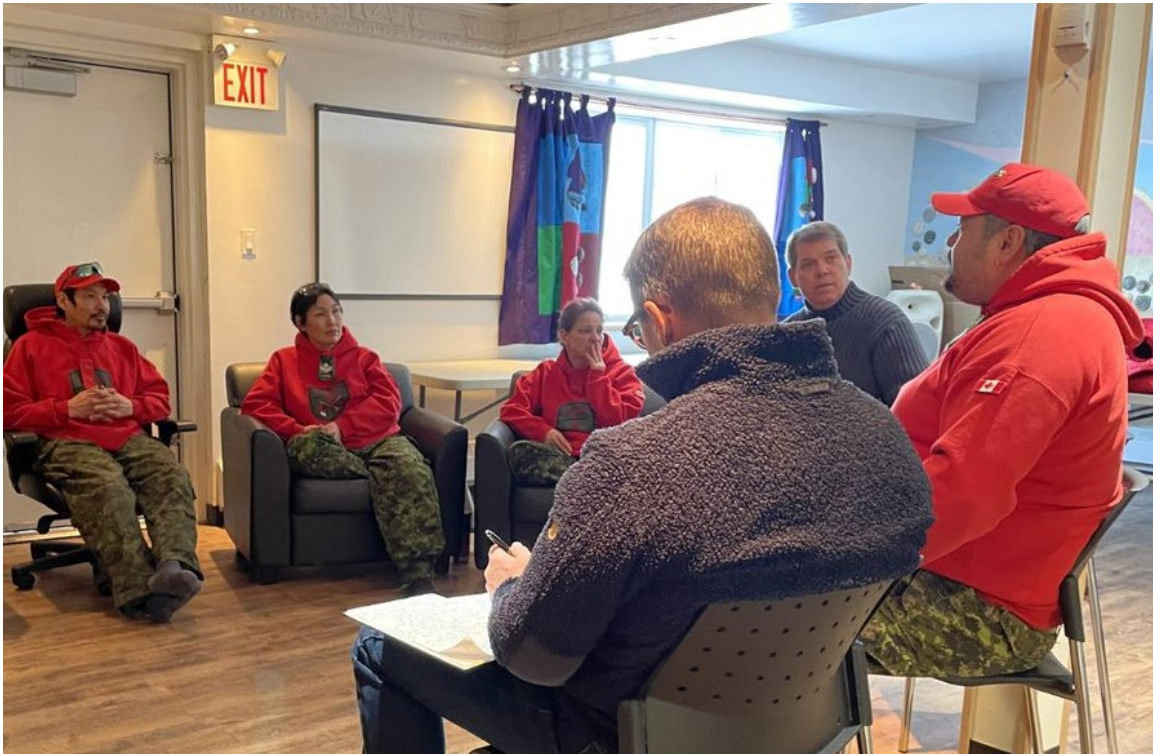
Recommendation 12

That the Government of Canada work with Northerners, territorial governments and First Nations, Inuit and Métis to establish a new joint rescue coordination centre in the territories to ensure that the Arctic is better served by the Canadian Armed Forces' search and rescue assets.

139 INAN, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2022 (Christian Leuprecht).

The Canadian Rangers

Figure 4—Members of the committee meet with Canadian Rangers in Kugluktuk, Nunavut



Source: Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs

Witnesses stressed the importance of the Canadian Rangers in the Arctic. Established in 1947, the Canadian Rangers are a sub-component of the Canadian Army Reserve. The 5,000 members of the Rangers live and work in more than 200 isolated, remote and coastal communities across Canada.¹⁴⁰ Witnesses were very positive in their remarks about the Canadian Rangers program. The Rangers are particularly important because they conduct patrols and assert Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic, as well as assisting in search and rescue efforts and emergency response.

As Dr. Lackenbauer explained,

Canadian Rangers are an example of a community-based capability within the Canadian Armed Forces, who provide important grassroots local responses across the spectrum of risk... The Rangers serve as the eyes, ears and voice of the Canadian Armed Forces in

140 Government of Canada, [About the Canadian Rangers](#).



remote regions. They guide southern-based soldiers who deploy to our north. Due to their presence and capabilities, Canadian Rangers regularly support other government agencies in preparing for, responding to and recovering from a broad spectrum of local emergency and disaster scenarios.¹⁴¹

He also highlighted their role and responsibilities:

They conduct patrols within their homeland. It's a way of showing the flag but also sharing knowledge with one another. They report unusual activities or sightings. They collect local information that's relevant to the military and other partners. They often work with other members of the military and members of other departments and agencies involved in domestic operations. There's a lot of high-profile involvement and assistance with search and rescue efforts.¹⁴²

Calvin Aivgak Pedersen, Volunteer with Kugluktuk Search and Rescue, stated that the Canadian Rangers are a lifeline for northern and remote communities:

As Canadian Rangers, we're on the ground. We live here. We are from here. We know the land. We know the people. We know the history, and that's priceless in any situation... Having local knowledge and expertise makes a huge difference. It will make a difference in saving people's lives in a timely manner.¹⁴³

Canadian Rangers use their own equipment (such as a snowmobile or all-terrain vehicle), for which they receive daily compensation (Equipment Usage Rate) when they are using that equipment to perform their duties.¹⁴⁴ Dr. Lackenbauer indicated, however that the Equipment Usage Rate should be revisited, to ensure that the amount provided is sufficient.¹⁴⁵ Mr. Pedersen explained that the Equipment Usage Rate “hasn't been updated for a long time... It helps a lot, but I think it could use an increase.”¹⁴⁶ He noted that this model works well as Rangers are more comfortable using equipment they are familiar with, but that the Equipment Usage Rate should be adjusted to keep up with inflation.¹⁴⁷ During its trip to the Arctic, the committee also heard from numerous

141 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 June 2022 (P. Whitney Lackenbauer).

142 Ibid.

143 INAN, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2022 (Calvin Aivgak Pedersen, Volunteer, Kugluktuk Search and Rescue, As an individual).

144 Ibid.

145 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 June 2022 (P. Whitney Lackenbauer).

146 INAN, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2022 (Calvin Aivgak Pedersen).

147 Ibid.

members of the Canadian Rangers in Kugluktuk about the length of time required for them to be reimbursed when they pay for material and parts out-of-pocket.

Dr. Lackenbauer highlighted the need to ensure “that Rangers qualify [for] and are paid [an] isolation allowance... to make sure that like anybody else working in those communities, their Ranger pay is supplemented by an acknowledgement of the costs of living in those individual communities.”¹⁴⁸ During its visit to JTFN-HQ, the committee learned that isolation pay was recently extended to Canadian Rangers located in the Arctic and that this pay was backdated.

Dr. Lackenbauer also stressed the importance of training for the Rangers:

Rangers really want challenging training opportunities. That also means having Ranger instructors who are able to go in sufficient numbers to work with them. A specific recommendation would be to ensure that the Canadian Army is treating Ranger instructors as a priority, and that investing in Ranger instructors, who in turn support the Canadian Rangers themselves, is an investment in Arctic sovereignty. It's an investment in security. It's an investment in safety, and ultimately it's an investment in communities.¹⁴⁹

During its trip to the Arctic, the committee met with Rangers in Kugluktuk. The Rangers explained that while those involved in decision-making are well-intentioned, some things do not work in the North. Rangers’ involvement in decision-making, therefore, has important benefits. The Rangers also expressed frustration with administrative requirements that they viewed as impeding their ability to do their jobs.

Often, Rangers must take time off from their regular jobs to work for the Rangers. Delays in salary payments being processed for Rangers after they are tasked was mentioned as a reason some residents have decided not to get involved with the Rangers. Timely and adequate compensation of a Ranger’s work is therefore key to recruitment and retention.

Based on the testimony, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 13

That the Government of Canada, recognizing the crucial role played by the Canadian Rangers with respect to security and sovereignty in the Arctic, take all measures

148 INAN, *Evidence*, 10 June 2022 (P. Whitney Lackenbauer).

149 Ibid.



necessary to ensure that they can effectively conduct their duties; and that in doing so, the government commit to:

- reviewing and adjusting the Equipment Usage Rate on an annual basis;
- ensuring that members of the Canadian Rangers continue to qualify for and are paid an Isolation Allowance;
- ensuring that the Canadian Rangers receive timely and adequate compensation for their work and personal usage equipment; and
- prioritizing investments in training for members of the Canadian Rangers.

Climate Change

Many witnesses pointed to climate change as one of the most serious threats to the Arctic and its inhabitants.¹⁵⁰ Climate change is a global threat, but it affects the Arctic in a unique way. According to Ms. Brown, “[m]assive environmental change has the Arctic emerging as the poster child for the real-world impact of climate change.”¹⁵¹

Dr. Lackenbauer explained that climate change compounds other risks and complicates emergency response in the region.¹⁵²

One way climate change represents a threat to the Arctic is through its impacts on infrastructure. In the Arctic, the thawing permafrost¹⁵³ is affecting the foundations of buildings as well as all-season roads; it is also shortening the ice road and construction seasons.¹⁵⁴ Ms. Brown quantified the cost of permafrost decay on public infrastructure at \$51 million per year, which is beyond “the capabilities of both community and the

150 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 June 2022 (P. Whitney Lackenbauer); INAN, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2022 (Shelley Cardinal); INAN, [Evidence](#), 21 June 2022 (Hon. Richard Mostyn).

151 INAN, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2022 (Sara Brown).

152 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 June 2022 (P. Whitney Lackenbauer).

153 In and around the Arctic, permafrost underlies most of the ground. A detailed map of the distribution, characteristics and boundaries of permafrost and ground ice in Canada can be found in the [National Atlas of Canada](#).

154 INAN, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2022 (Hon. Shane Thompson); INAN, [Evidence](#), 21 June 2022 (Vice-Chief Joseph Tsannie, Athabasca Denesuline, Prince Albert Grand Council); INAN, [Evidence](#), 21 June 2022 (Hon. Richard Mostyn); INAN, [Evidence](#), 26 September 2022 (Hon. David Joanase); INAN, [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022 (Meeka Atagootak, Elder, Hamlet of Pond Inlet, As an individual).

territorial governments.”¹⁵⁵ It is already more expensive to build and maintain infrastructure in the Arctic than elsewhere in the country and these costs are expected to rise even more.¹⁵⁶

Climate change may also have implications for Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. The Arctic seas are seeing an increase in traffic as sea ice recedes, thereby increasing the risk of maritime incidents, such as a shipwreck.¹⁵⁷ Dr. Leuprecht noted that a recent paper from the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) “suggested that climate change will precipitate varying degrees of unprecedented activity in the north.”¹⁵⁸

In its brief, Agnico Eagle Mines Limited also observed that climate change and rising geopolitical tensions may have consequences for the Canadian Arctic:

Climate change is impacting the Arctic faster than other regions, eventually opening up the territory to international access through Canadian waters and therefore to potential competition for control of the abundant resources found there—and the likelihood of a new genre of 21st century tensions.¹⁵⁹

As climate change feeds into geopolitics, the CAF may play a more active role in the region, to not only defend Canada’s interests, but also to respond to disasters.¹⁶⁰

In their testimony, witnesses made recommendations to address the impacts of climate change in the Arctic. Ms. Brown stressed the importance of implementing climate change adaptation measures at the community level. She also noted that funding is insufficient:

[Funding] has been hugely oversubscribed in the NWT, and we have been focused on treating traditional and local knowledge with respect. There's soon going to be a need for far greater amounts as we head into the capital phases of adaptation and communities attempt to take a proactive approach. Canada has the opportunity to make sure that the north is a world leader in climate change adaptation, and we have done recent work to demonstrate that the greatest economic stimulus from dollars spent is at a community level.¹⁶¹

155 INAN, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2022 (Sara Brown).

156 INAN, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2022 (Christian Leuprecht).

157 INAN, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2022 (Hon. Shane Thompson).

158 INAN, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2022 (Christian Leuprecht).

159 Agnico Eagle Mines Limited, 2022.

160 INAN, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2022 (Christian Leuprecht).

161 INAN, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2022 (Sara Brown).



The Hon. Shane Thompson, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and Minister of Environment and Climate Change for the Government of the Northwest Territories, made the following comments: “Our remote communities must be equipped to predict, prepare for and respond to climate change hazards, such as an increase in floods, fire, extreme cold weather events, erosion along rivers on the Arctic coast, unpredictable ice conditions and permafrost thaw.”¹⁶² The minister also mentioned the Pan-Northern Leadership Statement on Climate Change, issued by the three territorial premiers and Indigenous leaders:

This statement highlighted the need for investment in climate-resilient infrastructure, renewable and alternative secure energy systems, emergency preparedness, northern research, knowledge and capacity building, health and wellness, and the preservation of cultural identity and economic opportunities.¹⁶³

Dr. Coates recommended making additional commitments to enhance environmental well-being and sustainability: “We're doing the bare minimum in terms of monitoring environmental change. We're only getting started on remediation. Remediation is going to be the theme of environmental responsibility in the years to come.”¹⁶⁴

During its trip to the Arctic in March 2023, the committee met with Inuit Elders at the Kitikmeot Heritage Centre. The Elders shared their observations on shifts in the environment as the climate has changed, including fewer animals and fish, as well as the recent appearance of mosquitoes. Elders also mentioned that, due to coastal erosion, people have had to find new travel routes along the coast.

In Kugluktuk, the local hunters’ and trappers’ association had observed that predator populations, such as grizzly bears, have increased. This could have a negative effect on caribou herds. They also observed that changes to seasonal weather patterns are affecting wildlife in the region. For example, longer summers and a later fall freeze-up affect caribou and their migration route across the ocean straight from the mainland to Victoria Island. New diseases are also seen in wildlife, such as lungworm disease currently affecting the muskox.

162 INAN, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2022 (Hon. Shane Thompson).

163 Ibid.

164 INAN, [Evidence](#), 21 June 2022 (Ken Coates).

Based on the testimony, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 14

That the Government of Canada, recognizing that climate change disproportionately affects the Arctic region, work with northern and Indigenous partners to mitigate and adapt to climate change in the Arctic, notably by investing in net-zero and climate-resilient infrastructure, renewable energy systems, emergency preparedness, and northern research, knowledge and capacity building.

Infrastructure

The committee heard that the lack of adequate infrastructure in the Arctic is an impediment to ensuring security and asserting sovereignty in the region. It also hinders economic and social development. The committee previously made similar observations in its April 2019 report on the infrastructure deficit in the Arctic, *A Path to Growth: Investing in the North*.¹⁶⁵

Minister Mostyn indicated that Yukon was grateful for the federal infrastructure funding allocated to the Arctic.¹⁶⁶ However, the Hon. David Joanasié, Minister of Community and Government Services, Government of Nunavut, stated that current funding levels are simply not sufficient to meet the needs.¹⁶⁷ In its 2019 report, the committee had acknowledged that federal sources of funding for Arctic infrastructure were overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of the existing deficit and severely oversubscribed.

Minister Joanasié also indicated that Nunavut is “contend[ing] with factors that lower accessibility, increase costs and wear out... critical infrastructure.”¹⁶⁸ Minister Thompson explained that the lack of infrastructure “results in a high cost of living and doing business, which is a significant challenge identified by our communities and industry and erodes the potential for economic development.”¹⁶⁹

165 INAN, *A Path to Growth: Investing in the North*, 18th Report, April 2019.

166 INAN, *Evidence*, 21 June 2022 (Hon. Richard Mostyn).

167 INAN, *Evidence*, 26 September 2022 (Hon. David Joanasié).

168 Ibid.

169 INAN, *Evidence*, 14 June 2022 (Hon. Shane Thompson).



Witnesses raised issues with all types of infrastructure in the Arctic, from telecommunications and transportation to energy and housing.¹⁷⁰ The lack of an adequate housing stock was described as a “critical issue” that should be made a “national priority”¹⁷¹ given that it “is a key link in addressing a wide array of social and health challenges.”¹⁷² Dr. Coates also stressed the crucial importance of adequate housing for health, education and food security: “These things have to be seen in an integrated way, but if people are not well housed, they're never going to be well. It's as simple as that.”¹⁷³ In June 2022, the committee made observations on housing in its report, *The Effects of the Housing Shortage on Indigenous Peoples in Canada*.¹⁷⁴

Dr. Huebert stressed the importance of transportation infrastructure specifically: “You need to have the ability to move. That means, of course, ensuring that you have not only the runways beyond the forward operating bases,^[175] but also the communities' means of being able to get to each other in the event of an emergency.”¹⁷⁶ He also argued that “[y]ou need resiliency in the communications. This means that having simply one cable and one means of Internet connection is not good enough. The [federal] government has to ensure... that you have multiple means of information access and availability.”¹⁷⁷ Ms. Brown made similar remarks:

The pandemic has recently highlighted the north's vulnerability due to telecommunications challenges, whether in terms of online schooling, telehealth or virtual meetings. The development of a more robust communications network could not only assist the military and assert sovereignty but also greatly assist communities in enjoying a level of service that the rest of Canada takes for granted.¹⁷⁸

170 In June 2022, the committee presented a report, *The Effects of the Housing Shortage on Indigenous Peoples in Canada*. The Government of Canada [responded](#) to the report in October 2022.

171 INAN, [Evidence](#), 21 June 2022 (Ken Coates).

172 Agnico Eagle Mines Limited, 2022.

173 INAN, [Evidence](#), 21 June 2022 (Ken Coates).

174 INAN, [The Effects of the Housing Shortage on Indigenous Peoples in Canada](#), 3rd Report, June 2022.

175 The Canadian Armed Forces maintains Forward Operating Locations (FOL) across the Arctic. FOLs are location where supplies and infrastructure are prearranged to support the deployment of military personnel in remote areas.

176 INAN, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2022 (Robert Huebert).

177 Ibid.

178 INAN, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2022 (Sara Brown).

With respect to infrastructure more broadly, Dr. Coates explained that:

When you look at other countries, from northern Australia to Greenland, the military investment is done with a view to the infrastructure needs of society as a whole. You build a road, perhaps, in a slightly different place. You use the military to develop some sort of an energy system that then is applied to the non-military population. You link up the innovation strategies and the scientific work with the absolute needs of the community.¹⁷⁹

Dr. Lackenbauer similarly proposed making “strategic infrastructure investments that align defence and security needs with the well-established priorities of territorial, provincial and [I]ndigenous governments.” He explained that “addressing infrastructure deficits in the north that create vulnerabilities in the security sphere should be synchronized wherever possible to also address persistent social, health and economic inequities in the region.”¹⁸⁰

Ms. Brown recommended developing “a long-term plan to invest in northern infrastructure,” noting that “Canada needs to provide the funding to build the infrastructure necessary to sustain communities and support new industry, tourism, research and military activities.”¹⁸¹ Echoing other witnesses, she also stated the following:

We need to leverage military investment. This would lay the foundation for sustained growth and prosperity in northern communities while supporting Canada's long-term economic and military interests in the region. We need a vision for the north that integrates an increased military presence with building healthier communities, protecting the environment and diversifying the regional economies. This includes projects like the extension of the runway in Inuvik.¹⁸²

According to Ms. Brown, “the use of smart military investment is the backbone for building the new north.”¹⁸³

On 14 March 2023, the committee met with the Kitikmeot Inuit Association (KIA). The KIA mentioned the development of the Grays Bay Road and Port Project as a strategic

179 INAN, *Evidence*, 21 June 2022 (Ken Coates).

180 INAN, *Evidence*, 10 June 2022 (P. Whitney Lackenbauer).

181 INAN, *Evidence*, 7 June 2022 (Sara Brown).

182 Ibid.

183 Ibid.



nation-building project that it said should be a priority for Canada’s Arctic sovereignty.¹⁸⁴ The project proposes to build a 230-km all weather road and a deep-water port at Grays Bay to encourage and make viable the development of mineral resources in the Kitikmeot region of Nunavut.

The project could support the development of zinc–copper mineral deposits in the region at Izok Lake and High Lake and would connect Nunavut to mines operating in the Northwest Territories through the prospective Grays Bay Road. This project could also assist Kitikmeot communities with re-supply. In Kugluktuk, the committee heard that the project would also enable increased surveillance over the Northwest Passage. The project has not advanced due to high costs, estimated at approximately \$580 million several years ago and up to \$1 billion today.

During its visit to Cambridge Bay, the committee was also told that paving the hamlet’s runway was a priority. A longer, paved runway would allow more types of planes to land in Cambridge Bay. As it stands, only certain types of planes can land on Cambridge Bay’s gravel runway and the committee heard that some of these planes would soon be decommissioned, leaving the community more isolated.¹⁸⁵ Similar comments were heard in Kugluktuk.

Based on the testimony, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 15

That the Government of Canada develop and implement, with Indigenous and northern partners, a long-term plan to invest in northern infrastructure; that this plan be used to better align strategic investments in military and civilian infrastructure in remote and northern regions of the country; and that infrastructure investments in the Arctic focus on community sustainability and socioeconomic development.

184 According to an article from *Nunatsiaq News* published a few days after the committee’s trip to Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, the Kitikmeot Inuit Association (KIA) will no longer contribute funding to the Grays Bay Road and Port Project. The KIA said it believes the project should be fully funded by the government but remains “a big supporter of the project.” See: Randi Beers, “[Kitikmeot Inuit Association withdraws from Grays Bay port and road project](#),” *Nunatsiaq News*, 17 March 2023.

185 Not all aircrafts are able to land on gravel runway. Unpaved surfaces can, for instance, damage the engines on certain planes.

Arctic Sovereignty

During this study, witnesses also spoke about Arctic sovereignty. Dr. Huebert defined sovereignty as referring “to the ability of a government to control a specific land mass and maritime region. For the Arctic context that means the control of the maritime zones; that means the internal waters of the Northwest Passage.”¹⁸⁶

In Dr. Exner-Pirot’s opinion, near-term disputes around Arctic sovereignty will focus on “the seabed and the ability of a country to be able to regulate that seabed of its extended continental shelf.”¹⁸⁷ Mr. Shimooka said that “[c]oncerns in the region and on the ground must be identified and addressed in full consultation and discussion with the communities to address those issues and address what sovereignty means in those localities.”¹⁸⁸ Similarly, in its brief, Agnico Eagle Mines Limited noted the following:

Sovereignty is made real by permanent, connected residents and commercial activity within a Nation. An Arctic and Northern Strategy that builds-up the people and economy of the North will be essential in this potential new era of challenges to our sovereignty that affect not only Canada, but especially those who make the Arctic home.¹⁸⁹

Although disputes over Canada’s sovereignty in the Arctic are “exceedingly unlikely to result in direct military conflict,” Mr. Shimooka said that “Canada still must maintain the civil and military capabilities across the entire spectrum as a potential response.”¹⁹⁰

With Russia becoming bolder in asserting territorial claims over Arctic waters, Dr. Leuprecht indicated that “Canada needs to... double down on making sure it has the capacity to insist on the commonly agreed-upon norms, conventions and legal imperatives because those will have adverse effects on local communities when they are not being adhered to.”¹⁹¹

For his part, Dr. Coates noted that,

defending Arctic sovereignty and improving the lives of [!]Indigenous people is very expensive. I know this is the last thing members of the House want to hear, but get ready to spend way more money than you're spending now. That's what's happened in

186 INAN, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2022 (Robert Huebert).

187 INAN, [Evidence](#), 26 September 2022 (Heather Exner-Pirot).

188 INAN, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2022 (Richard Shimooka).

189 Agnico Eagle Mines Limited, 2022.

190 INAN, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2022 (Richard Shimooka).

191 INAN, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2022 (Christian Leuprecht).



Greenland, in the Faeroe Islands and in northern Norway. Canada is trying to get by on the cheap in terms of the developments and investments in the north.¹⁹²

Minister Thompson praised the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework, launched in 2019, as “the road map to success in Canada's Arctic.” He continued by saying: “It provides an opportunity for Canada to show leadership in asserting Arctic sovereignty by empowering and equipping communities to be both resilient and responsive in the changing international landscape.”¹⁹³ Similarly, Agnico Eagle Mines Limited wrote that Canada should implement a comprehensive Arctic Vision and Strategy:

As far back as 1958, the federal government had a “Northern Vision” to protect Canada’s Arctic sovereignty and to develop its natural resources for the benefit of all Canadians. Sixty years later, our Arctic sovereignty remains under pressure more than ever and we are still trying to agree on a strategy and a path forward that takes full advantage of the great opportunity that is present in the North and its people... A robust Arctic Vision and Strategy to support responsible development of these Inuit-owned resources furthers our national aim of reconciliation, creating new paths of economic opportunity, while protecting Canadian sovereignty.¹⁹⁴

During its trip to the Arctic, the committee met with the Honourable Caroline Cochrane, Premier of the Northwest Territories. The Premier outlined her concerns about Arctic sovereignty following the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the risks the war poses to Arctic security and cooperation more broadly. She noted that, while she is briefed by the Department of Defence (DND), she would like regular communication with DND officials and would like to coordinate closely with the federal government on any priorities announced in the territory. Premier Cochrane stated that nothing should happen for the North without the North and stressed the need for northern leaders to be involved in all aspects of decision-making.

What is clear from the testimony is that Canada should play a bigger role in the Arctic; it can no longer limit its approach to sovereignty to a mere “showing the flag” routine. Based on the testimony, the committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 16

That the Government of Canada, in partnership with Indigenous peoples, Northerners and territorial governments, develop and implement a long-term strategy and vision to

192 INAN, *Evidence*, 21 June 2022 (Ken Coates).

193 INAN, *Evidence*, 14 June 2022 (Hon. Shane Thompson).

194 Agnico Eagle Mines Limited, 2022.

assert Canada’s sovereignty in the Arctic; and that such a policy be designed to support reconciliation and to empower resilient and responsive local communities.

The Arctic Council

As noted above, one witness spoke about the future of the Arctic Council, in the wake of Russia’s unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine. Dr. Exner-Pirot wondered how Canada and its allies should proceed with the Arctic Council:

[The Arctic Council] is currently on pause and the question of how and to what extent to involve Russia is being debated now in foreign ministries in Washington, Oslo, Copenhagen, Helsinki and beyond. There are no easy answers but I am convinced that the Arctic Council cannot go on as it has and must become an A7 [Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the United States].¹⁹⁵

She did, however, stress the fact that diplomatic channels must be maintained with Russia on certain issues such as climate change, Arctic fisheries and marine shipping regulation, but that “we can create space for this to be done at a technical level and on issue-specific concerns without the restraints and concessions that a regional organization such as the Arctic Council would impose.”¹⁹⁶

However, Dr. Exner-Pirot also raised concerns around the continued participation of Indigenous peoples in the Arctic Council if the body were disbanded: “[I]f you get rid of the Arctic Council, where will be the place that indigenous peoples are included to the level that they have been in the Arctic Council?”¹⁹⁷

Based on the testimony, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 17

That the Government of Canada, in partnership with like-minded states and Indigenous permanent participants, determine the best way forward for the Arctic Council considering Russia’s unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine; and that the government work with its partners to facilitate the continued participation of Indigenous peoples in intergovernmental cooperation in the Arctic.

195 INAN, *Evidence*, 26 September 2022 (Heather Exner-Pirot).

196 Ibid.

197 Ibid.



CONCLUSION

The committee members who travelled to Nunavut and the Northwest Territories found that the issues witnesses had raised about Arctic sovereignty, security and emergencies during the committee's Ottawa meetings were brought to life when they were in the north. It was an invaluable experience that strengthened the committee's findings on these topics. The committee notes, however, that many of the recommendations relating to housing, food security and infrastructure in the Arctic have appeared in previous reports.

Similarly, with respect to emergency management in First Nations communities, the committee notes that many of the issues witnesses raised, and many of the recommendations contained in this report, echo those in its 2018 report *From the Ashes: Reimagining Fire Safety and Emergency Management in Indigenous Communities*. The committee urges priority action on this file. As Minister Hajdu told the committee, "it should be embarrassing to all of us that we haven't done a better job as a treaty partner, as a partner in many other ways, with [...] [I]ndigenous people over decades of commitments. We should all be embarrassed by that, and we can all do better."¹⁹⁸ So let's do better, and support First Nations communities so that they can fully exercise their right to self-determination and protect their people and their lands during emergencies.

198 INAN, [Evidence](#), 1 December 2022 (Hon. Patty Hajdu).

APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the committee’s [webpage for this study](#).

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Atikamekw Council of Manawan Chief Paul-Émile Ottawa	2022/06/03	23
Grand Council Treaty No. 3 Debbie Lipscombe, Executive Director	2022/06/03	23
Shackan Indian Band Chief Arnold Lampreau	2022/06/03	23
Tsay Keh Dene Nation Raymond Lamont, Chief Negotiator and Special Projects Lead	2022/06/03	23
As an individual Robert Huebert, Associate Professor, University of Calgary Richard Shimooka, Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute	2022/06/07	24
Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Derek Fox Michael McKay, Director, Housing and Infrastructure	2022/06/07	24
Northern Village of Beauval Nick Daigneault, Mayor	2022/06/07	24
Northwest Territories Association of Communities Sara Brown, Chief Executive Officer	2022/06/07	24
As an individual P. Whitney Lackenbauer, Professor, Trent University	2022/06/10	25

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs John McKearney, President and Fire Chief Tina Saryeddine, Executive Director	2022/06/10	25
First Nations' Emergency Services Society Anthony Moore, President of the Board of Directors	2022/06/10	25
As an individual Christian Leuprecht, Professor, Royal Military College of Canada Calvin Aivgak Pedersen, Volunteer, Kugluktuk Search and Rescue	2022/06/14	26
Canadian Red Cross Shelley Cardinal, Director, Indigenous Relations Sarah Sargent, Vice-President, Programs, Emergency Management	2022/06/14	26
Government of the Northwest Territories Hon. Shane Thompson, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and Minister of Environment and Natural Resources	2022/06/14	26
As an individual Ken Coates, Professor and Canada Research Chair in Regional Innovation, Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Saskatchewan	2022/06/21	27
Government of Yukon Hon. Richard Mostyn, Minister of Community Services	2022/06/21	27
Meadow Lake Tribal Council Marcia Mirasty, Senior Director, Health	2022/06/21	27
Prince Albert Grand Council Vice-Chief Joseph Tsannie, Athabasca Denesuline	2022/06/21	27
As an individual Heather Nicol, Director, School for the Study of Canada, Trent University	2022/09/26	29
Government of Nunavut Hon. David Joanasie, Minister of Community and Government Services	2022/09/26	29

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government Darcy Gray	2022/09/26	29
Macdonald-Laurier Institute Heather Exner-Pirot, Senior Fellow	2022/09/26	29
Tsilhqot'in National Government Joe Alphonse, Chief	2022/09/26	29
As an individual Meeka Atagootak, Elder, Hamlet of Pond Inlet	2022/10/03	31
Grand Council Treaty No. 3 Lucas King, Director, Territorial Planning Unit	2022/10/03	31
Mohawk Council of Akwesasne Sarah Sunday-Diabo Dwayne Thomas	2022/10/03	31
Municipal District of Taber Merrill L. Harris, Reeve	2022/10/03	31
Pelmorex Corp Kurt Eby, Director, Regulatory Affairs and Government Relations	2022/10/03	31
Office of the Auditor General Doreen Deveen, Director Karen Hogan, Auditor General Glenn Wheeler, Principal	2022/11/28	42
Department of Indigenous Services Hon. Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services Kenza El Bied, Director General, Sector Operations Branch, Regional Operations Sector Valerie Gideon, Associate Deputy Minister Joanne Wilkinson, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Regional Operations Sector Gina Wilson, Deputy Minister	2022/12/01	43

APPENDIX B LIST OF BRIEFS

The following is an alphabetical list of organizations and individuals who submitted briefs to the committee related to this report. For more information, please consult the committee's [webpage for this study](#).

Agnico Eagle Mines Limited

Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation

Canadian Red Cross

Lil'wat Nation

Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Pelmorex Corp.

Tsay Keh Dene Nation

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 31, 32, 42, 43, 59 and 70](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenica Atwin
Chair

