



23 Mitchell Dr PO Box 1093
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Representing Northern Business Since 1973

December 16, 2019

Tom Williams, President & CEO
NWT Housing Corporation
5102 50th Ave
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P6
Email: Tom_R_Williams@gov.nt.ca

Dear Mr. Williams,

The NWT Chamber of Commerce represents over 100 members as well as over 3,500 businesses of every size and sector throughout the NWT. In a recent interview with Cabin Radio (<https://cabinradio.ca/27122/news/housing/housing-corp-welcomes-dene-nations-push-for-federal-cash/>) on December 09, 2019 you were quoted as saying “Williams, however, says the housing corporation is doing what it can and looking at ways to help private homeowners. For example, Williams **told NNSL** (paywall), the corporation is looking at asking its local representatives to act as a form of hardware store for residents of small communities, who may otherwise struggle to find adequate supplies at a reasonable price.”

This quote is extremely upsetting and discouraging to the NWT Chamber as well as our 6 Community Chambers. A majority of communities have privately owned and operated hardware stores where the owners struggle to stay open due to the excessive high costs of operation due to the remoteness of where they are located as well as the minimal population to whom they can sell to. We respectfully request that the NWT Housing Corporation immediately cease any further planning and/or roll out of the above-mentioned program. This will irreparably harm existing local businesses in an already grim economic outlook. We encourage the Housing Corp to be a partner with the local hardware stores as indicated in your mission statement and purchase all applicable materials directly from the existing hardware stores either within the community, or the closest neighbouring community, and/or create credits for those individuals requiring materials to improve/repair their homes.

The role of government and crown corporations is not to be competition to private industry but to help support it and grow the economy. If the local hardware stores had more government support, they would be able to lower their prices due to the increase in sales. Driving businesses to shut down due to the lack of support or unnecessary competition created by their own government is unfair and against the Housing Corporations own mission statement “The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWT HC) works in partnership with residents, where appropriate and necessary, to ensure access to affordable, adequate and suitable housing”.



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The local retail trade accounts for \$208m of the NWT GDP (2017) and the whole sale trade accounts for \$155m. Though that only accounts for 8% of the NWT GDP it is still a vital source of employment (both skilled and unskilled) in the communities and a tax revenue that the GNWT and Housing Corporation should help foster, not eliminate.

We look forward to your immediate action on this matter and follow up.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Renée Comeau".

Renée Comeau
Executive Director
NWT Chamber of Commerce
Representing 108 members & 3,500+ NWT bases businesses

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Jenni Bruce".

Jenni Bruce
President
NWT Chamber of Commerce

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Deneen Everett".

Deneen Everett
Executive Director
Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce
Representing 388 members & 1782 Yellowknife-based businesses

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Kyle Thomas".

Kyle Thomas
President
Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce



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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Boden".

Mary Boden
President
Hay River Chamber of Commerce
Representing 79 members & over 200 Hay River based businesses

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kyle Wright".

Kyle Wright
Director
Norman Wells and District Chamber of Commerce
Representing 30 members & over 200 Sahtu based businesses

Fort Simpson Chamber of Commerce (signature not available)
Representing members & over 100 Fort Simpson based business

Thebacha Chamber of Commerce (signature not available)
Representing members & over 200 Fort Smith based business