



Media Statement – Northern Premiers issue Pan-Northern Statement on Senate Committee’s Arctic Security Report

YELLOWKNIFE (July 7, 2023) – Today, Caroline Cochrane, Premier of the Northwest Territories and Chair of the Northern Premiers’ Forum, along with Nunavut Premier P.J. Akeeagok and Yukon Premier Ranj Pillai issued the following statement on the Senate Committee on National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs’ report entitled *Arctic Security Under Threat: Urgent needs in a changing geopolitical and environmental landscape*:

“During last week’s Western Premiers’ Conference, we spoke at length about security and sovereignty in Canada’s Arctic. The geopolitical context of the North is changing, and Canada must keep pace to ensure its residents and communities are not left behind.

“The Senate Committee’s report is centered around three themes: the international security environment and the Arctic; Arctic security and increased access to the region; and military capabilities and security infrastructure in the Arctic.

“Ensuring that the north and northerners are safe, healthy and secure is a priority for all Northern Premiers. As regrettable as some global current events are, they have increased awareness around the issue of Arctic security and sovereignty. I, along with my territorial counterparts in the Yukon and Nunavut, have been advocating for Arctic security and sovereignty that respects northern and Indigenous voices.

“We welcome the recommendations around multi-purpose infrastructure that meet local and territorial needs, improve broadband internet connectivity, and provide social and economic benefits for Arctic communities. This is messaging that Northern Premiers have advanced and it is good to see that language reflected in this report.

“The economic and social security of the people who live in the north is critical to our national security. Without substantial investment in the North, issues like the cost of living, particularly the rising cost of food and fuel, will eventually force residents out of the North, the same residents that support Canada’s efforts on Arctic security and sovereignty.

“It is no surprise the report highlights that “Climate change compounds security risks in the region and is having significant impacts on Indigenous peoples in the Arctic.” With Canada’s North warming at a rate up to four times faster than the global average, there are significant risks to delaying action any further.

“The aim of the Canadian Armed Forces, to have net-zero emissions by 2050, will require major levels of investment in proven reliable clean energy sources in a region that has historically been reliant on fossil fuels. Canadian investment in clean energy in the Arctic will not only

bolster Arctic security, but it will also help reduce the cost of living for northerners who are bearing the brunt of rapidly rising fuel prices.

“We are pleased to see the recommendations reflect the importance of having Indigenous governments and treaty rights holders at the table. This is not just about benefiting from Indigenous knowledge and skill; it is also about economic participation in Arctic security. Investments such as NORAD modernization can be a valuable tool for economic reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

“It is of the utmost importance that the Government of Canada not only actively listen to and involve local, territorial and Indigenous leadership from our three territories when developing defence policies around Arctic security, but it is critical that Canada takes action and invests in the Arctic.”

Quick facts:

- In May 2023, Northern Premiers issued a communiqué which included a call for more support for infrastructure and clean energy initiatives, including investment from federal and private sector partners to support Arctic security and sovereignty.
- In May 2022, Northern Premiers and Indigenous leaders from across the North issued the [Pan-Northern Leaders’ Statement on Climate Change](#), which included a call for the Government of Canada to increase attention, investment and support for climate-resilient infrastructure to support the continued safety and resilience of Northern communities and economies.

Related links:

- [Senate of Canada news release](#)
- [Arctic Security Under Threat: Urgent needs in a changing geopolitical and environmental landscape](#)

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