

**MLA Prasad Panda (UCP)
Calgary-Foothills**

Page 65 of the AG report indicates “the department approved some projects without having sufficient information to support its assessments against required criteria such as the reasonableness of project costs”. Can you detail which projects those were, and have reports been submitted? (PA - 619)

RESPONSE

- The projects reviewed during the audit were related to principal and interest payments over a million dollars, developments near existing casinos, and capital expenditures for large projects. The projects reviewed were Tsuut’ina Nation housing and Enoch Cree Nation River Cree Resort.
- Audited financial statements signed by Chartered Professional Accountants have been received and reviewed for these projects.
- In addition, the program has implemented a complex grant application assessment process that requires First Nations to describe and provide supporting documentation on the First Nation’s cost processes prior to projects being approved.

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How much money from the First Nations Development Fund has been given to River Cree Resort? (PA – 619)

RESPONSE

- As of November 28, 2017, approximately \$140 million has been funded for the approved River Cree Resort project. These funds are to cover the principal and interest payments on the construction loan for the resort and casino. Please note, the First Nations Development Fund is only funding the non-gaming portion of the loan and is not covering any operating costs associated with the casino.

**MLA Jessica Littlewood (NDP)
Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville**

Can more than one Nation apply for FNDF funding for a project together? (PA – 619)

RESPONSE

- Yes, they can. However, each Nation is required to submit an application and Band Council Resolution for their contribution to the joint project.

MLA David B. Hanson (UCP)
Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills

Blue Quills is actually owned by the seven First Nations in the area. So can they, in conjunction, apply together to assist Blue Quills? (PA – 619)

RESPONSE

- If the project pertaining to Blue Quills is an economic, social or community development project and meets eligibility requirements, then yes. Each Nation would be required to submit an application, Band Council Resolution and a report accounting for their contribution to the project.

MLA Richard Gotfried (UCP)
Calgary-Fish Creek

Has the department asked grant recipients why providing the required reporting under the grant agreement has been a challenge, and can you let the committee know what the department can do to assist? (PA – 615)

RESPONSE

- A focus group was held on November 22 to 24, 2017 with representatives from First Nations and ministry staff. The focus group conducted a performance analysis to identify various gaps impacting the administration and delivery of the FNDF Grant program. At the focus group session, the First Nations representatives identified a number of areas where the ministry staff can provide more assistance and support.
- From this, appropriate training interventions will be developed to address the identified gaps and will be delivered to all FNDF First Nations' staff by March 31, 2018.
- The department has and will continue to provide support and meet with Nations to address any non-compliance. In addition, staff have met with accounting firms to resolve late reporting.
- In addition, we will continue to provide FNDF orientations to new Chief and Councils, administrative and program staff.

MLA Prasad Panda (UCP)
Calgary-Foothills

Why were business revenues omitted from consideration in the application for the Courtyard by Marriot hotel in Cold Lake? (PA – 617)

RESPONSE

- The project you are referring to was not mentioned in the AG report. In subsequent follow up with the AG's office it was determined that this project was not a part of their audit.