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Editor
Northern News Services
BY EMAIL: editor@nnsi.com

Premier Bob McLeod's mistaken comments on federal "colonialism" denying us the opportunity of offshore fossil fuel development miss the economic reality of today, condemn us to the energy past, and perpetuate the colonialism the Premier complains about.

First, the Premier claims that the federal government has cut our economic throat by denying development of offshore oil and gas resources. Wake up. Big oil isn't even interested in the on-shore oil and gas his government controls, let alone the impossibly expensive development of offshore sources. An economic development policy balanced on impossibly expensive fuels stranded far from markets is a plan from the past doomed to economic failure. And, perhaps incidentally to the Premier, there is no demonstrated ability to clean up oil spills in arctic marine environments – the stated reason why the Prime Minister set this moratorium.

Second, the Premier himself admits that fossil fuel use is "wreaking havoc" with the planetary environment, but says it is only fair that we get our crack at climate destruction. So although he knows the science and the danger, his leadership is to actively plan increased harm in a world that is finally recoiling from greenhouse gas vandalism. Studies clearly show that oil and gas development creates the lowest number of jobs per dollars invested, and provides only modest government revenue under our royalty regime. The Premier needs to think about the highest interest of the young people he says are his concern, and join in preventing the environmental ruin that will make our next generations' lives disastrous. The Premier needs to lead us to the promising economy of renewable energy, which is being built beyond our borders, and beyond his vision.

Finally, the Premier speaks of colonialism, when not one word of his "red alert" was crafted in consultation or partnership with the First Nations people who governed these lands long before the arrival of his provisional government. A territorial government carried on in isolation from its own Indigenous citizens is the most damaging colonizing force.

We need an end to the resource dependent, export driven economy that is subject to the boom and bust of commodity prices, and controlled by corporate interests outside the NWT. We need a diversified economy that builds on our strong cultures and natural environment, and honours the science that tells us fossil fuels must stay in the ground if we are to have a planetary future. Lead us there, Premier McLeod, or get out of the way.



Co-Chair
Council of Canadians NWT Chapter