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MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

PRESS RELEASE – The planned cuts of Floyd Roland

“The proposed cuts of \$135 million over the next two years to the GNWT budget announced yesterday by Premier Floyd Roland will have a devastating effect on the Territory,” says Jean-François Des Lauriers, Regional Executive Vice-President of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, of which the Union of Northern Workers is a component.

The territory has yet to fully recover from the deep cuts in transfer payments sustained in the 1990’s when then Finance Minister Paul Martin and the Chretien Liberals slashed social spending to offer tax cuts to the wealthy, and these cuts were not even half of what Roland is now proposing.

“Of course there will be public sector jobs lost and we will fight for our members’ rights” says Des Lauriers. “But our members are not the only ones who will be hurt by this ill advised plan. It will hurt the most vulnerable in our society: women, children, the elderly and the poor. It will also hurt our capacity to defend the environment at a time when the North is facing historic challenges due to the effects of global warming.”

This is not a crisis of spending; it is a crisis of revenue. With the economy of the NWT on fast forward, the government’s income should easily maintain the services we currently have and even improve them.

“The citizens of the NWT will notice a huge deterioration in the quality of public services, should this plan receive the support of the Legislative Assembly” said Des Lauriers. “We urge the MLAs to oppose this and find solutions that will benefit citizens of the NWT; not create another twenty years of pain and suffering.”

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