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Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform

July 31, 2024

Chair Sara McPhee-Knowles, PH.D.

Dear Ms McPhee-Knowles,

Thank you for your letter to Faro Town Council dated July 10, 2024. Council for the Town of Faro appreciates and respects the challenge being undertaken by the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform.

It was indeed unfortunate that your scheduled ZOOM meeting was offered at the same time that we had a scheduled a Regular Council Meeting, as several of us would have liked to virtually attend. We do understand, though, that there is no 'good time' on everyone's calendar. Therefore, I offer this written response as my opportunity to provide my comments about the Electoral Reform initiative.

Electoral Reform in any region or country is a challenge, so I can appreciate the challenges that the Yukon Citizens' Assembly must be facing in the Yukon. Certainly, we understand the reasoning of creating a working committee of 38 members from the 19 electoral ridings to review the various options open for the Yukon to introduce Electoral Reform.

Speaking as the Mayor for the Town of Faro, I have learned first-hand that it is difficult to create cross-sectional representation for controversial topics ... and our controversial topics are limited to boundaries of our little community. I cannot fathom the challenge of selecting only two people, from each electoral district in the Yukon, who could provide clear cross-sectional representation of that each district.

Of course, one of the main criticisms that the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform will probably face will be that the committee members were appointed, not elected. As such, whatever findings that the Yukon Citizens' Assembly proposes to the Legislative Assembly will be subject to criticism of having a biased committee composition.

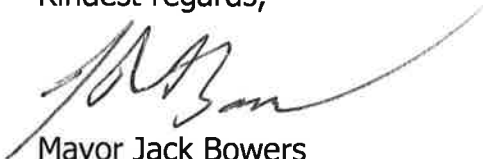
Given this reality, I strongly encourage you to consider putting the question to a Referendum. Whatever the decision by the full population of the Yukon, it will be the decision that the majority will be prepared to support. Otherwise, I fear that any solution

proposed will be questioned and be subjected to significant opposition. As you note in your letter, the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform is proceeding "... *with the assumption that the public is a resource ...*". Keeping this in mind, calling for a Territorial Referendum will address those concerns and taps into that acknowledged resource.

I would also be interested in learning who the two committee members that the Yukon Citizens' Assembly selected from our electoral district, as I would like to have a conversation with them to glean their perspective on this initiative. As these 38 committee members were appointed, not elected, I fear that the Yukon Citizens' Assembly could be unintentionally setting these committee members up for criticism and failure.

Please feel free to share my comments and concerns with all Assembly members as I believe they should understand that the Town of Faro has a sincere interest in this project.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Bowers', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Mayor Jack Bowers  
Town of Faro

cc: Premier Ranj Pillai  
Stacey Hassard, MLA Pelly Nisultlin  
Kate White, NDP Leader  
Amanda Janssens, CS Municipal Advisor  
Lauren Hanchar, AYC President