



Alternatives North

Media Release

January 19, 2016

What Now for the Sahtu Region? Economic Report Offers Progressive Vision

With the collapse of the oil and gas economy in the Sahtu Region, Alternatives North has released a report investigating how a more balanced and sustainable approach to economic development could provide a brighter economic future for the region.

Economic Futures in the Sahtu Region: A Discussion Paper on Building a Balanced Economy was prepared for Alternative North by researchers Diana Gibson, David Thompson, and Allison Thompson of PolicyLink Research and Consulting.

The report examines the strengths and weaknesses of reliance on non-renewable oil and gas extraction, contrasted with the economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits of a diversified and localized economy based upon renewable resources and service and cultural industries. It identifies key policy and investment opportunities for the GNWT that could provide meaningful support to all families and communities of the Sahtu.

“The Sahtu Region struggles with some of the lowest incomes, highest unemployment rates, and highest costs of living in the NWT,” says Diana Gibson, “Decades-long emphasis on oil and gas development has done nothing to improve that situation, with non-residents getting most of the jobs and residents getting all of the social problems.”

“The NWT Premier and Industry Minister has said ‘the oil and gas industry has packed up and left the NWT.’ We need to hear government’s plans for a more reliable Sahtu economy,” Gibson says. “Our report provides the facts to fuel that discussion.”

The report also serves as a lesson for the other regional economies of the NWT, such as the diamond-reliant North Slave. It shows how money spent in the local economy stays in the region and multiplies its benefits far more than spending on capital-heavy big industry.

Regional leaders have been consulted on the findings of the report, which will be shared with Members of the Legislative Assembly for their consideration in mapping economic development programs and supports for the region.

Contact:

Craig Yeo 867 445 2149 craig.yeo@gmail.com