

Mr. David Jones

Integrity Commissioner

300 Noble Building

8540 -109 Street Edmonton AB

T6G 1E6

Ph: 780-433-9000

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Mr. Jones:

I write this letter to inform you of a significant matter concerning the conduct of one of our colleagues.

I have recently been made aware of a formal complaint filed against Diane Thom, our Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Social Services. The complaint was made April 10, 2020, and was submitted to Bruce Cooper, the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Service.

The complaint alleges that Ms. Thom violated both the COVID-19 public health order and the Code of Conduct for the elected Members of the Legislative Assembly.

The specifics of the complaint are as follows. In March, 2020, Ms. Thom attended a party at her friend's cabin near Airport Lake in Inuvik. No less than 10 people attended the party with individuals that were supposed to be in self-quarantine themselves - a violation of the Public Health Order prohibiting such gatherings. The complaint also alleges that Ms. Thom was seen driving a skidoo while under the influence of alcohol the same evening.

All members of the Legislative Assembly swear an oath to live up to the highest standards of behavior and ethical conduct. We know that without accountability, those in positions of power can use their influence to escape the consequences of their actions. This government expected everyone to comply with its health measures, there were no exceptions given for the Minister. The fact she disregarded her own Order shows that she believes the rules do not apply to her.

As elected Members of this Assembly, I know that we are aware of these allegations - they were brought to your attention both in our caucus and later by the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight on May 26, 2020.

Even though you were made aware of these allegations, as you recall that in both instances Premier Cochrane denied that a formal complaint had been made. The truth is that not only was a formal complaint submitted on April 10, 2020 to Mr. Cooper but also subsequent complaints were submitted to Glen Rutland, Deputy Clerk, Lesa Semmler, and MLA for Twin Lakes and to the Speaker.

The Premier's choice to willfully mislead her caucus colleagues and the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight is extremely unfortunate. She may try to argue that she was not aware of a complaint but text messages between myself and Ms. Thom prove that not only was the Premier aware of the complaint but actively instructed Ms. Thom to downplay the seriousness of the event in an effort to save face publically.

It is important that we ensure this Assembly lives up to the high standards we have set for ourselves and acts in accordance with our principles, our Code of Conduct and as role models for our people. I have included for your reference and consideration copies of evidence that I received in Min. Diane Thom's own words as you can clearly see a draft of her public apology related to these events.

Therefore, I would like to recommend that an independent investigation, from outside the Northwest Territories, be retained to investigate these allegations against Min. Diane Thom without delay.

Sincerely,

Jackie Jacobson
Member of the Legislative Assembly for Nunakput