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### **Dene National Chief Norman Yakeleya presents to House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance; highlighting COVID-19 challenges for Dene Nation**

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**[Yellowknife, Northwest Territories – April 8, 2020]** - Dene National Chief Norman Yakeleya presented today via teleconference to the House of Commons Standing Committee and stressed the importance of adequate and ongoing support and resources for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I want to thank Canada for their work and response to date and working with the Dene Nation to protect the health and wellbeing of our people,” said National Chief Norman Yakeleya. “The Dene Nation spearheaded with support from Canada to assist Dene families to go out on the land as a form of isolation and the best form of defence and protection. However, we are also very concerned about the economic health of the NWT, with all the lay-offs, business closures in addition to food security.”

Also, National Chief highlighted on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Dene Nation had passed a motion calling on the GNWT to immediately institute restrictions on the sale of alcohol and cannabis through the rationing of alcohol and cannabis, restricted hours of sale, increased monitoring to curtail bootleggers and support for communities to use authority to prohibit alcohol, should they choose.

With the approaching flood and forest fire season, and gaps cited through a recent community survey, National Chief Norman Yakeleya highlighted to the Standing Committee the importance of strong government to government relationships. This includes the need to increase funding for elders and knowledge keepers to support food security and essentials, like prescriptions.

“We will continue to work with Canada to ensure the Dene people and communities are adequately resourced to support our communities through the gaps identified in our recent community survey. Our Dene governments want to work with the Government of the Northwest Territories on a government to government basis. This means a direct flow through of funding. Simply put, nothing about us, without us,” continued Yakeleya.

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