



MR. SHANE THOMPSON
MLA, NAHENDEH

AUG - 9 2019

Oral Question 705-18(3) Fort Simpson Ferry Service

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question you raised on May 23, 2019 regarding concerns about the disruption of service for the Fort Simpson ferry caused by low water levels. I committed to contact the responsible authority to accurately survey the river to determine possible alternative routes.

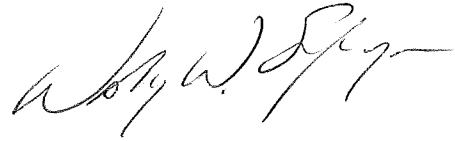
The Department of Infrastructure (INF) has reviewed the water levels and hydrographic information from Environment Canada for both the Liard River and the Mackenzie River in the vicinity of Fort Simpson. The Mackenzie River, being the larger river, influences the water levels in the lower sections of the Liard River. Based on the historical data, there appears to be a slight lowering of the average water levels over the last twenty years and the data also shows large fluctuations in water levels on an annual basis. The hydrographic information clearly suggests that, given the wide variation of water levels on the Liard River, the original decision makers factored in the depth of the water when choosing this good location for the ferry crossing.

The review of annual operations of the ferry crossing shows that ice flow has been the traditional determining factor for the closing and opening of the ferry season. The operational staff continues to keep the ferry landing areas operational by modifying, or re-building the landing pads in response to water level fluctuations, on a continual basis during the ferry season.

The Department has looked at several alternative sites for a ferry crossing and potential bridge crossings. All these alternatives sites are all prohibitively expensive, have their own risks, would add ongoing additional operational expenses, and may not guarantee a better long term solution for a ferry crossing than what we already have.

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Regardless, the Department of Infrastructure is committed to monitoring this river crossing, as this crossing is an important transportation link not only for Fort Simpson, but for the future Mackenzie Valley Highway system.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wally Schumann', written in a cursive style.

Wally Schumann
Minister
Infrastructure

c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Legislative Coordinator
Executive and Indigenous Affairs