



MR. R.J. SIMPSON
MLA, HAY RIVER NORTH

JUN 28 2018

**Oral Question 263-18(3) Dredging of the Port of Hay River, and 313-18(3)
Dredging in Hay River Harbour**

This letter is in follow-up to two Oral Questions you raised regarding the dredging of the Hay River Harbour on March 14, 2018 and May 28, 2018 in the Legislative Assembly, where I committed to providing information on funding available under the Oceans Protection Plan (OPP) and short-term measures for dredging the Hay River Harbour.

In November 2016, the federal government announced the new OPP, which includes \$1.5 billion in funding over five years, starting in 2017-18. The OPP consists of four pillars focused on increasing marine safety, protecting the environment, strengthening partnerships with Indigenous communities, and improving oil spill response. Over 50 initiatives are being developed by the federal government to support the implementation of the OPP.

In spring 2018, Transport Canada began accepting submissions under the Safety Equipment and Basic Marine Infrastructure in Northern Communities Initiative. Through this initiative, \$94.3 million will be invested over five years in on-the-ground safety equipment and basic marine infrastructure in communities in the Northwest Territories (NWT), Nunavut and select communities in northern Quebec and Labrador.

As stated in my initial letter response to Oral Question 263-18(3), dated March 21, 2018, the estimated cost of restoring the Hay River Harbour to full draft access is \$8 to \$10 million. The Department of Infrastructure (INF) has had preliminary discussions with Transport Canada in regards to the eligibility of this project for funding under the OPP. Transport Canada has indicated generally that it does not want to fund dredging activities and therefore a formal submission for dredging has not been submitted. However, INF continues to request that the federal government recognize the priorities of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and provide the support needed to implement the Hay River Harbour restoration plan.

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In May 2018, INF submitted an application under the Safety Equipment and Basic Marine Infrastructure in Northern Communities Initiative of the OPP for the completion of a planning study that would identify opportunities for the expansion and improvement of the Hay River Terminal and the development of a Tuktoyaktuk Marine Services Centre to support enhanced marine operations and to contribute to future economic growth. Short-term solutions to improve access around the Hay River Harbour would be included as part of the study and could strengthen the case for federal investment in dredging. The results of the study will help to leverage future submissions under the OPP to undertake the identified improvements. It is anticipated that an update on the status of the submissions will be provided by the end of summer 2018.

In the meantime, INF and the Canadian Coast Guard are developing a working group to address a number of issues of common interest regarding marine transportation and marine infrastructure in the NWT. Items of discussion will include a possible trades apprenticeship program at the Marine Transportation Services Shipyard, educational programs cooperation through the Hay River Marine Training Centre, the provision of maintenance and support to the operations of the Canadian Coast Guard, and pursuing a cooperative approach to dredging at select points at Hay River and on the Mackenzie River system.

Thank you for your continued interest in the restoration of the Hay River Harbour. This matter continues to be a priority for the GNWT and updates on progress will be provided to Members as they become available.



Wally Schumann
Minister
Infrastructure

c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Legislative Coordinator
Executive and Indigenous Affairs