

**GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
RESPONSE TO MOTION 4-17(4)  
FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR SAHTU JOBS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

**Motion**

***NOW THEREFORE I MOVE***, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) immediately initiate discussions with Canada to prioritize funding for an all-weather Mackenzie Valley Highway from Wrigley into the Sahtu;

***AND FURTHER***, that the GNWT immediately initiate discussions with the Government of Canada to seek federal investment in human resource development initiatives along the lines of the Voisey's Bay model;

***AND FURTHERMORE***, that the GNWT provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.

**GNWT Response**

Two major issues were raised in this particular motion:

1. Funding for an all-weather Mackenzie Valley Highway, and
2. Funding in human resource development initiatives similar to the Voisey's Bay model.

As the two separate issues related to two separate GNWT Departments, input was solicited from both, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI), and the Department of Transportation (DOT).

**Funding for an all-weather Mackenzie Valley Highway (DOT)**

During the debate of this motion when it was presented in the Legislative Assembly on February 26, 2013, the Minister of DOT noted that the Mackenzie Valley Highway Project ...*"Has been identified as a priority of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly and remains a priority of this government. An all-weather highway up the Mackenzie Valley to Tuktoyaktuk supports Canada's sovereignty goals and territorial aspirations for resource development and other economic opportunities. The Mackenzie Valley Highway is expected to help reduce the cost of living, improve health care and education opportunities, support families in communities in the region and provide significant long-term employment and contracting opportunities to residents of the Northwest Territories (NWT)."*...

Additionally:

- The construction of the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk portion of the road is an important first step to realize the vision of the Mackenzie Valley Highway from Wrigley to Tuktoyaktuk. At the same time we are working to move forward the southern portion of the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

- DOT submitted an application to the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board to construct the Wrigley to Dempster portion of the Highway. The environmental review process is currently underway. Scoping Sessions were hosted by the environmental review board in Mackenzie Valley communities in September, 2013 toward the development of a Terms of Reference for the Developer's Assessment Report. The commencement of the environmental review process marks an important milestone for an all-weather road through the Valley.
- The federal government, through the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, has committed \$600,000 of the \$8 million estimated cost of the environmental assessment for the southern portion of the Mackenzie Valley Highway. Additional partnership funding has been requested from CanNor, Infrastructure Canada and industry to complete the environmental and baseline studies required to fulfill the environmental review process. However, to date no additional funding has been committed.
- The completion of the environmental assessment is a first step toward the completion of the Highway, and the GNWT will continue to press the federal government for additional funding for the environmental assessment, while reminding them of the need for a significant federal investment for the construction of this important project.
- Over the past 10 years, working with our federal partners, the GNWT has invested over \$120 million in incremental improvements that contribute to the eventual construction of the Highway, including permanent bridges and grade improvements. We will continue to work with federal government and industry partners to advance the project and support the interests of NWT residents.
- The Mackenzie Valley Highway project is important for economic development in the NWT. It is being planned so as to maximize business opportunities, training, and employment. This requires a strategic, incremental approach which the GNWT is pursuing.
- In anticipation of a new federal infrastructure program, the GNWT has developed a new strategic investment proposal titled *Corridors for Canada III – Building for Prosperity*, which sets out our priorities for federal transportation infrastructure funding. Within *Corridors for Canada III*, the GNWT has proposed an investment of \$127 million toward the Mackenzie Valley Highway under the anticipated new merit based National Infrastructure Fund Program. The proposed investment includes completion of the environmental assessment, construction of the Bear River, Oscar and Bosworth Creek Bridges, a winter road connecting Fort Good Hope and the Dempster and grade improvements on the existing winter road.
- The GNWT will continue seeking partnership opportunities to advance the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

- The GNWT has had ongoing dialogue with oil and gas companies exploring and operating in the Sahtu Region. As exploration and development advances, the GNWT will continue pursuing partnership opportunities for the construction of permanent infrastructure to support economic development activities in the region.
- The Mackenzie Valley Highway will continue to be a priority within the development of the multi-modal transportation strategy that will be completed in 2014. The multi-modal transportation strategy will build upon work underway toward the development of the Economic Opportunities Strategy and Mineral Development Strategy.

### **Funding in human resource development initiatives similar to the Voisey's Bay model (ITI)**

In respect to a Voisey's Bay Model, the issue of established processes for expedited planning, development and investments has been raised as part of the Economic Opportunities Strategy development.

Many approaches to human resource development were raised to the Economic Opportunities Advisory Panel during its NWT-wide consultations regarding the development of the Strategy. Those approaches will be considered in the implementation of the Strategy.

