

THE HONOURABLE DIANE ARCHIE  
MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE

**Inuvik Airport Runway Expansion Project**

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question 41-19(2) asked by the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes on March 31, 2022, regarding the Inuvik Airport Runway Expansion project.

A request was made to update the House on the discussions the Department of Infrastructure has had with regard to the runway extension project and if the time-sensitive part of the project will occur this year.

Mr. Speaker, the design team has confirmed that the best time to undertake the initial earthworks is in the fall when the frost is in the ground and there is minimal snow cover. It would not be responsible to proceed with work when there are budget concerns. That said, the technical teams of both the Joint Venture and the Department met and resumed negotiations on April 22, 2022, for Work Package 3, Embankment Construction. Negotiations have not yet concluded; however, if they are successful, the project schedule can be re-adjusted to coordinate construction within a favourable season. I am comfortable with the efforts of my team on this project.

The negotiation process is progressing between the technical teams, and it is ultimately between them to find a solution within the available budget, whether that is through engineering solutions, design/technical revisions, methodology improvements or an understanding of where the available budget is incorrect to provide the basis for further discussion with the funding partners. The federal government has signaled a commitment to provide some additional funding for the project to address inflation and supply-chain costs, subject to due diligence, although the exact dollar value and timelines are not yet known. The Department recognizes the impact this project will have on local employment,

and has identified some preparatory work that can be undertaken while the discussions continue over the summer.

I have been asked if I can commit to ensuring this project does not suffer unnecessary delays moving forward. Mr. Speaker, it would not be responsible to proceed with work when we have concerns that we cannot complete the work within the available budget. As I mentioned earlier, I am comfortable with the efforts of my team on this project and I will commit to ensuring the Department continues to exercise due diligence to mitigate any risks to the Government of the Northwest Territories and the project funder, and to follow the *Negotiated Contracts Policy*.

Mr. Speaker, regarding the question about ongoing communication between the two teams, I can confidently say that the Joint Venture has been kept informed of the next steps required to address the funding gap, in addition to work plans and surety required. Future meetings between the Joint Venture and the Government of the Northwest Territories are planned in May and will continue into the summer, as we continue to work to find solutions to the funding gap with hope of realizing way forward to construction.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.