

**THE HONOURABLE DIANE ARCHIE
MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE**

Slave Geological Province Corridor

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question asked by the Member for Frame Lake on March 30, 2021, regarding the Slave Geological Province Corridor.

A request was made to provide details on the phases of construction of the Slave Geological Province Corridor. Specifically, the questions were asked to identify: the timeframes of construction; how each phase of construction will be operated and financed; the calculated costs of each of the phases including a breakdown of construction and anticipated operations costs, and the engineering class for the costs estimates; and whom the Corridor will serve. There was an additional question about how caribou and their key habitat have been considered in the preferred location for each of the phases of the Corridor.

Regarding the first two questions, the advancement of the Slave Geological Province Corridor is a priority of the 19th Legislative Assembly and falls within the *2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories* commitment to make strategic infrastructure investments that connect communities, expand the economy or reduce the cost of living.

The Slave Geological Province Corridor has been identified as critical for future economic development in the Northwest Territories, as it will improve access to significant mineral resources in the region, increase the resilience of the region's

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current transportation system to impacts of climate change, as well as promote increased tourism and other business opportunities.

The current priority for the Government of the Northwest Territories is the Environmental Assessment for the Lockhart All-Season Road portion of the Corridor, which will provide all-season access to Lockhart Lake from the terminus of Highway 4 at Tibbitt Lake.

In August 2019, Transport Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories announced \$40 million in funding under the National Trade Corridors Fund towards the completion of the Lockhart All-Season Road Environmental Assessment, and preliminary planning for the remainder of the Corridor from Lockhart Lake to the border with Nunavut. Financing methods and models for the construction, operation and maintenance will be explored as project planning advances, and following engagement with Indigenous governments and organizations, and with federal counterparts.

The timelines for construction of the Lockhart All-Season Road and the remainder of the Slave Geological Province Corridor will be contingent upon the outcomes of the Environmental Assessment, final design, and our ability to secure additional federal funding.

Regarding the third question on cost estimates, responses can be found in the Impact Economics paper titled “Economic Study of the Slave Geological Province Road”, which was prepared in March 2019 and is available on the Department of Infrastructure website. As work on the project advances, there will be refinements made to these preliminary estimates.

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Regarding the fourth question, the most recent Corridor route analysis from 2020 factors in caribou core ranges and caribou habitat utilization, among other datasets. This includes, but is not limited to, archeologically sensitive sites, watercourses and waterbodies, and landcover classifications.

Additional public and Indigenous engagement along with environmental, engineering and design work will be required before finalizing the Corridor route.

Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.