

2023 Winter Road Season and Community Fuel Re-supply

Mr. Speaker, winter roads play a role in connecting families and businesses in the territory. Every year, they allow essential goods like fuel for electricity generation, heat, and transportation to be delivered to communities and homes.

The Government of the Northwest Territories recognizes the importance of these community lifelines, and remains committed to building, operating and maintaining accessible winter roads for all residents of the Northwest Territories.

Today, I am providing an update on the GNWT's successful 2023 winter road season and fuel resupply activities.

Each year, highway crews in the Beaufort Delta, Sahtu, Dehcho, and North Slave regions build and maintain approximately 1,400 kilometres of winter roads, ice roads, and ice crossings. This important work connects nine NWT communities that are not served by all-season roads while reducing the cost of living for the residents who live there.

Many communities rely heavily on diesel and gasoline for electricity generation, heat, and transportation. Transporting fuel by winter road is the quickest and most cost-effective method of winter delivery. This year, the GNWT's seasonal fuel resupply started on February 7th and was completed on April 6th. The total volume of petroleum products delivered by winter roads totaled close to 5.2 million litres to six NWT communities.

The winter road season is always demanding on our Fuel Services and winter road teams, who have mere months to construct and make use of these seasonal connections. This year required particular diligence, attention to detail, and collaboration, as milder than normal

temperatures early in the season along with heavy snowfall made conditions in some areas especially challenging.

The environmental challenges required even more oversight and administration from our teams. They conducted enhanced profiling and inspections, and responded to all issues, protecting the safety of the public and employees. Our team overcame challenging conditions by working closely with contractors, transport companies, and multiple divisions of the GNWT.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge that the same conditions that required such tireless work from our staff and contractors also created challenging circumstances for our residents. To protect driver safety, it was necessary to open some winter roads later than usual, and some closed with little warning in the spring. While this was necessary, I do recognize how frustrating it can be, and I want to thank NWT residents for their patience as we all adjust to new patterns in the winter road season.

Mr. Speaker, one of our government's priorities is to make strategic infrastructure investments that connect communities, expand the economy, and reduce the cost of living. The work done by our winter road staff and contractors helps achieve this priority, and this year required them to step up like never before. Thanks to their diligence and dedication, we had another safe and successful season.

Our government will continue to work with the public and private sector partners to maintain a dependable supply of essential goods and services to all NWT communities.

Quyananni, Mr. Speaker.