



June 3, 2020

MR. JACKSON LAFFERTY
MLA, MONFWI

**Oral Question 187-19(2):
National Trade Corridor Submission for Frank Channel Bridge**

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question raised on March 12, 2020, regarding the National Trade Corridors Fund (NTCF) submission for the Frank Channel Bridge (FCB). As I was absent from the House, the Minister of Finance responded to the questions on my behalf. I am now providing follow-up information as committed by the Minister of Finance.

In 2017, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) submitted two applications for federal funding under the first call for submissions under Transport Canada's (TC) NTCF. The applications were for the Mackenzie Valley Highway (MVH) and the Slave Geological Province (SGP) Corridor, including the replacement of the FCB as a critical component of the SGP Corridor. The GNWT's application for funding for the MVH was approved in part.

In 2018, TC issued a second call for submissions under the NTCF specific to projects in the three territories. The GNWT submitted two applications under the NTCF northern call, one for the SGP Corridor and a separate application for the FCB. In consultation with Standing Committee, a letter was sent from the Premier of the Northwest Territories (NWT) to the Minister of TC, advising that the GNWT was submitting two applications, with the priority being the SGP Corridor. Confidential copies of the funding applications were provided to all Members of the Legislative Assembly.

In August 2019, the GNWT's application for funding for environmental impact assessment and planning studies for the SGP Corridor was approved. The application for funding for the replacement of the Frank Channel Bridge was not approved.

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TC announced that there would be an additional \$400 million made available through the NTCF for projects in northern Canada. The GNWT plans to resubmit the FCB replacement project under the next round of applications, which is expected early in 2020/21. The project meets the objectives of the NTCF program and would be the GNWT's highest priority submission. It is anticipated that the project would be successful in the next call.

In light of the significant impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is possible that there may be some changes to government funding programs. Department of Infrastructure staff are continuing to monitor this and await further notification with respect to a call for submissions under the NTCF.

In the meantime, the Department of Infrastructure is continuing efforts to advance the project and explore funding options, including pre-engineering and environmental baseline work, permitting, and community engagement. Concrete deck repairs on the bridge were also carried out in September 2018 and June 2019 as an interim measure to preserve the bridge until major project funding is in place for replacement.

In follow up to the Minister of Finance's commitment, arrangements can also be made to provide Committee with a briefing on the status of the project and funding opportunities as they become available.

Sincerely,



Katrina Nokleby, P.Eng.
Minister, Infrastructure

c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Legislative Coordinator
Executive and Indigenous Affairs