

Government of
Northwest Territories

July 28, 2023

KATRINA NOKLEBY
MLA, GREAT SLAVE**Oral Question 1519-19(2) Resurfacing Fort Smith Airport Runway**

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question raised on May 26, 2023, regarding the resurfacing of the airport runway in Fort Smith. I committed to looking into why that airport and runway were not used by Electra aircrafts fighting wildfires near Hay River and Kátł'odeeche First Nation, and to provide more details regarding the runway resurfacing project at the Fort Smith Airport.

In November 2022, the Department of Infrastructure (INF) completed an overlay of the 30-metre-wide runway surface, main apron, and taxiways at the Fort Smith Airport. The project was successful and was completed on time and on budget.

At the same time, INF provided a temporary ramp to enable aircraft access to the Department of Environment and Climate Change's (ECC) leased area at the airport, outside the scope of the runway improvement project.

In April 2023, a pre-wildfire-season assessment conducted by INF and ECC representatives confirmed that additional work was required at the temporary access ramp to provide proper clearance for some fire response-equipped aircraft to access the ECC lease area. Additionally, a permanent access point to the ECC lease area was set to be completed for June 2023.

On May 21, in response to an unusually early start to the fire season, INF completed a new temporary gravel access to the ECC lease area, which corrected the issue.

It should be noted that the temporary ramp did not, at any time, impact aircraft ability to land on or take off from the runway.

I can advise that in June 2023, the asphalt access ramp to the ECC lease area was completed.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Archie'.

Diane Archie
Minister, Infrastructure

- c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Legislative Coordinator, Executive and Indigenous Affairs