

Completion of an All-Weather North-South Trans Canada Highway

In support of infrastructure to spur economic development and speed Canada's economic recovery, the nation needs an all-weather north-south Trans Canada Highway through the Mackenzie Valley to the Arctic coast.

This country's development was driven by creating overland east-west transportation linkages - both rail and road - but work remains if we are to truly connect Canada from sea to sea to sea. It was Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker who first proposed an all-weather highway connection to Canada's Arctic coast and more than 50 years later, his vision has yet to be fully realized. It would cost roughly \$1.2 billion to extend the Mackenzie Valley Highway from its current terminus near Wrigley to Tuktoyaktuk.

There are many benefits related to the construction of this much needed infrastructure project. It would ensure Canada's sovereignty in the North, improve our ability to respond to emergencies, allow business and residents to better adapt to climate change both in terms of reduced dependence on winter roads and enhanced ability to develop alternative energy sources to diesel-generated power, reduce costs for business and residents in six currently isolated, predominantly First Nations communities, encourage economic development in the North, and increase tourism opportunities.

Based on the Government of the Northwest Territories' (NWT) research, an extended all - weather Mackenzie Valley Highway would spur development in the petroleum industry generating the following results:

- A boost of up to \$58.9 billion to national GDP,
- More than 86,000 person - years of employment, with more than 71,118 of these outside the NWT, related to exploration and development, and
- Up to \$15 billion in government revenue with the majority of this flowing to Ottawa

Construction of this much-needed piece of infrastructure would create thousands of short-term construction-related jobs with the territorial government estimating the lower section between Wrigley and Fort Good Hope alone requiring up to 2,360 person-years of labour during development and as many as 55 full-time employees related to ongoing annual maintenance.

Recommendations

That the federal government:

1. Fund the completion of an all-weather north-south Trans Canada Highway through the Mackenzie Valley from Wrigley to Tuktoyaktuk in the NWT to achieve several priorities:
 - Speed Canada's recovery from the recession,
 - Fuel economic development across Canada, and
 - Enhance Arctic sovereignty as climate change makes the North and its resources much more accessible.

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2. Move ahead with this project immediately as a means of improving the economics of the Mackenzie Gas Project by reducing logistical challenges related to construction of the proposed pipeline.