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MVEIRB
Yellowknife, NT.

March 19, 2024

RE: Mackenzie Valley Highway Environmental Assessment #1213--02

I am writing to express deep concerns regarding the proposed construction schedule for the MVH Wrigley-Norman Wells All-Season Road in the Developers Assessment Report (DAR).

As outlined in the provided documentation, the proposed completion date of 2037 is simply unacceptable and the concern has been echoed by constituents and organizations like Sahtu Secretariat Inc.,

The current construction timeline fails to adequately address the pressing issues of climate adaptation that our region faces. As highlighted in the Non-Technical Report (referenced below), the ramifications of such a prolonged timeline could be catastrophic, particularly considering the escalating impacts of climate change.

Please refer to page 7 of the Non-Technical report; MVH DAR Non-Technical Summary

It is imperative to underscore that shorter, more realistic construction schedules are not only financially prudent but also crucial for mitigating unnecessary costs and addressing the urgent infrastructure needs of our communities. A comparative analysis with recent northern projects, such as the Inuvik Tuk Highway and the Tlicho All-Season Access Road, highlights the glaring inefficiency of the proposed timeline. The discrepancy in progress, averaging 50-60 kilometers per year for other projects versus a mere 28 kilometers yearly for the MVH Wrigley-Norman Wells road, is stark and concerning.

Furthermore, the extended timeline poses significant threats to the region's supply chain, affecting industries, commercial activities, and residents alike. The cancellation of the last 2023 barging season trip serves as an attention seeking reminder of the escalating costs and delays associated with inadequate infrastructure. In the face of inevitable climate change, adaptation must be at the forefront of our decision-making processes.

Moreover, it is crucial to acknowledge the dynamic nature of navigational waterway channels, particularly in light of sedimentary deposits from the Liard River basin.

Past experiences, such as the sedimentary changes affecting the Norman Wells oilfield six man made Islands, serve as pertinent reminders of the sensitive nature of our environment.

In conclusion, I urge a swift reconsideration of the proposed construction schedule for the MVH Wrigley-Norman Wells All-Season Road. Our sovereignty as a nation hinges on our ability to provide equitable access to resources and opportunities to our people. It is incumbent upon us to prioritize the well-being of our communities and address their pressing infrastructure needs in a timely and efficient manner.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Respectfully,

Daniel McNeely
MLA, Sahtu

cc. SSI Chair Charles McNeely
GNWT, Minister of INF Caroline Wawzonek
Mayor, Town of NW Frank Pope
GNWT INF DM, Steve Loutit