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Three Territories to put a Pan-Territorial Focus on Infrastructure Needs

YELLOWKNIFE (April 3, 2012) – Ministers from Nunavut, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories have agreed to support a coordinated approach to working with the Government of Canada and highlighting shared challenges in infrastructure development. Together the territories will advocate for infrastructure programs that address the unique realities of building and maintaining infrastructure in the North.

All provinces and territories are working with Canada and with other jurisdictions in discussing what future infrastructure programs should look like. This partnership between the three Territories is not intended to work outside of that consultation process, but instead is intended to demonstrate the common issues that are faced in the three territories that are not experienced in the provinces.

“Working together to focus on shared priorities with Yukon and Nunavut is important in securing the future of infrastructure across the north,” said Northwest Territories Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Robert C. McLeod. “Having infrastructure that is well maintained and meets standards is a step towards the Government of the Northwest Territories goal of building sustainable, vibrant, safe communities.”

“By using a unified voice all three territories will be able to bring our infrastructure priorities to the forefront when working with our federal counterparts,” said Nunavut Minister of Community and Government Services, Lorne Kusugak. “The unique infrastructure needs in the North will be better addressed by all parties working together.”

“Predictable and sustainable long-term infrastructure support for our northern territories is essential,” said Yukon Minister of Community Services, Elaine Taylor. “We share similar challenges in developing and maintaining community-based infrastructure in the North and will be looking for innovative ways to overcome these through the development of Canada’s new long-term infrastructure plan.”

Media requests for interviews with Members of the Executive Council may be directed to:

Office of the Press Secretary • Premier/Cabinet
Government of the Northwest Territories • PO Box 1320 • Yellowknife • NT • X1A 2L9
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The realities of building, repairing, and operating infrastructure in Canada's North are unique and costly. The reality of small remote communities which make up Canada's North is that they are spread over a vast landscape and require complex logistics. The high construction and maintenance costs coupled with the continued economic growth are all factors that reflect some of the on-going pressures facing northern community infrastructure. These parallel challenges continue to be addressed through innovative means of optimizing federal funding dollars. Through partnerships between the territories, it is hoped that future federal infrastructure programs are flexible to meet unique northern needs while building a stronger more sustainable north.

Recent federal infrastructure programs like the Building Canada Plan and the Gas Tax Fund have had significant positive impacts and are prime examples of how the Government of Canada and each territory have been able to work together to meet national program objectives and northern needs. Working together the three territories hope to help shape the permanent Gas Tax Program, which will succeed the current agreement that expires in 2014, and the programs that succeed the Building Canada Plan, scheduled to end in 2016.

Collectively the territories see an opportunity to continue with a funding model that meets the challenges of the North, and through partnerships with the Government of Canada will work to create jobs and boost the economy while making significant investments that will help communities improve their infrastructure.



From left to right: Minister Lorne Kusugak (Nunavut), Minister Elaine Taylor (Yukon), and Minister Robert C. McLeod (Northwest Territories).

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