



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6



March 28, 2017

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Freeland,

I am writing today to make you aware of the Alaska Highway Shakwak Project, a critical piece of infrastructure connecting Canada and the United States, and to ask that you work with the U.S. to have funding reinstated for the reconstruction of this corridor.

By way of background, the Shakwak Agreement has been in place since 1977, for the reconstruction and maintenance of the Shakwak portion of the Alaska Highway from Haines Junction, Yukon to the Alaska Border and extending down the Haines Road. As per the agreement, the U.S. agreed to pay the cost of reconstruction, while Canada would manage the reconstruction, provide land and granular resources, and provide maintenance.

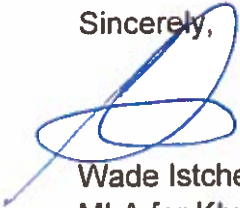
Unfortunately, the previous U.S. administration stopped including funding for this project in late 2012. This means that the funding available for reconstruction of this corridor is almost completely exhausted. However, there are major capital improvements required for this part of the Alaska Highway and the lack of secured funding for reconstruction places the future of the Shakwak corridor, Yukon's largest trade route, in jeopardy.

The Shakwak portion of the Alaska Highway is an integral transportation link to the North and a key component to Yukon's economic infrastructure. Additionally the highway serves as a supply route for oil and gas development in Alaska as well as a strategic asset to security and sovereignty in Canada and the U.S. An improved highway system through the commitment of funds to this project would provide safer travel to the thousands of vehicles that travel the highway daily during the summer months, the majority of which is American traffic.

I am appreciative of the good working relationship between Canada and the U.S. in past years and hope that it can continue. Given that the new U.S. administration has demonstrated interest in supporting capital projects of national importance to both of our countries, such as Keystone XL, there may be an opportunity to bring forward this critical matter for review. By raising this with your counterparts we may once again see the U.S. contribute much needed funding to this critical piece of infrastructure.

Thank you for your attention to this inquiry, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Wade Istchenko
MLA for Kluane
Yukon Legislative Assembly