

July 2, 2019

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau

House of Commons

Ottawa, Ontario

Canada, K1A 0A6

Climate change is more than a catch phrase for those of us who live in the North. On a daily basis we feel the impacts of climate change on our communities and on the quality of life of each community member.

The South is assured of government supported quality health care, transportation, food access, education and growth opportunities. We are not.

A report submitted to the UN Human Rights Council by its special rapporteur, Philip Alston, on extreme poverty states that;

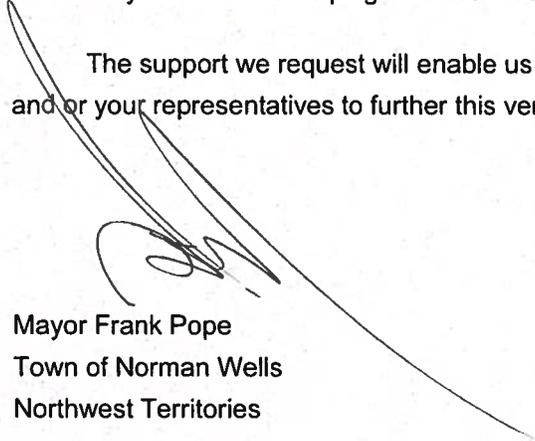
“An over-reliance on the private sector could lead to a climate apartheid scenario in which the wealthy pay to escape overheating, hunger, and conflict, while the rest of the world is left to suffer.”

His report criticized governments for doing little more than sending officials to conferences to make “sombre speeches,” even though scientists and climate activists have been ringing alarm bells since the 1970s.

In Canada the climate apartheid scenario Alston refers to is presently playing out in the North. Neither Federal Party has made solutions to this apartheid a component of their election platforms.

We have enclosed a package outlining the impacts of climate change and government negligence on our community. The provision of an all season road will support our quest for more independence and community health while helping other seriously affected parts of the North such as the Arctic islands.

The support we request will enable us to grow into the future. We respectfully ask for a meeting with you and/or your representatives to further this very important discussion.



Mayor Frank Pope
Town of Norman Wells
Northwest Territories

Advocacy Plan – All season road

Issue:

Federal and territorial support for an affordable and accessible all season transportation route up the MacKenzie Valley.

Development in Canada's North is falling far behind that in northern regions in other parts of the world. In Canadian consciousness, it is not a consistent national priority. The majority of Canadians are not aware of the North, its uniqueness, its peoples and the rapid change it is experiencing. There is no one worrying about long-term economic development in the North and making the kind of investments required.

Although an all-weather road was recently completed to the Beaufort Sea coastline, the Northwest Territories is still asking for money for a route up the Mackenzie Valley.

NWT Premier Bob McLeod "Pollution from decades of developing oil and gas reserves in places like Alberta and British Columbia and the ensuing pollution from burning those fuels to drive cars and heat homes, has wreaked havoc on the North.

McLeod said \$2.6 billion in planned investments in offshore exploration disappeared with the onset of Trudeau's moratorium and yet Canada hasn't come to the table with any aid to replace that."

The Sahtu Region also lost an estimated \$220 Million in oil and gas exploration by Husky Energy, Conoco-Phillips, and MGM Energy. These exploration projects ended with the drop in the world price of oil and the anti-fracking movement and more especially the lack of affordable access to the natural resource.

Climate change has rendered the North, its residents and their communities more vulnerable.

Ours is a solid argument for an all season road as per the impacts of climate change on our;

- Community health
- Community sustainability
- Cost of living
- Emergency services
- Food security

In Canada's north, climate change is no longer an abstract idea. There is strong evidence, both from scientific data and local observations, that climate change has had and is having an impact. Substantial warming and increases in precipitation are projected for the 21st century.

- Mackenzie Region-This region, which contains most of mainland NWT, has warmed by 1.5 degrees C over the past 100 years. Scenarios project maximum warming in higher northern latitudes in winter, and little warming in summer. Warming of up to 5 degrees C by 2050 is also projected.

From building winter roads on frozen lakes and rivers to the migration of caribou herds, climate is an important factor in the management, development and conservation of natural resources, and in the sustainability of northern communities.

An increase in the frost free period in the North could affect access to many sites now reached via winter roads built on frozen ground. Northern transportation routes rely on the properties of frozen ground materials for stability. Warmer winters are causing problems for ice roads. They are freezing later and melting earlier in the spring. This has made transporting goods and people to the communities and mines that depend on these roads more difficult. As the climate changes and temperatures rise, these problems are expected to increase.

As the climate warms and ice roads become more unreliable in the North, more proposals for all season roads are cropping up. They are expensive. But they are critical to the future of northern people, their communities and industry. The cost of maintaining the territory's ice roads has tripled in the past 15 years, due to the required specialized equipment.

Every Community Health Indicator is impacted in the North by climate change and the fact it is exacerbating already existing transportation/accessibility issues.

The territories generally fall behind the Canadian average on measures of equity and social cohesion. Key challenges that help explain these outcomes include educational attainment, service availability, geographic isolation, and lack of infrastructure. Culturally specific measures of social cohesion, such as access to informal networks of emotional, social, and material support, are vital to understanding social cohesion in the territories and especially in remote Northern Indigenous communities.

Deficits in critical infrastructure, such as all season roads, keep communities separated, impede the delivery of health and educational services, and hinder economic opportunities.

Economic growth and status:

- Business retention and vitality
- Access to mainstream financial services (community purchasing power)
- Ability to reduce poverty
- Availability of public services
- Income equality and employment opportunities

Educational Opportunities:

Measures how well our systems are training community residents and giving them the tools necessary to move up the economic ladder. There is a correlation between the following;

- Strong relationship between educational opportunities and health
- Education accessibility and school environment
- Early childhood, K-12 and adult education
- Extracurricular and after-school activities available

Employment Opportunities:

Employment measures can range from occupational training to rates of employment and job satisfaction. There is a strong correlation between employment and health. Indicators within this domain measure a household's self-sufficiency, i.e.: ability to earn enough income without receiving community and/or government assistance.

Environmental hazards

Natural and manmade events that have harmful impacts on the surrounding natural environment and adversely impact public health.

- Landfill remediation
- Solid waste management
- Brownfields
- Climate change impacts on coastline, roads, infrastructure, transportation routes

Health Systems and Public Safety

Indicators included in this domain reflect the quality of health systems, and factors such as preventable hospitalizations, school absence, birth weight and crime.

Housing:

Can include a range of issues from housing starts, residential density, foreclosure rates, building conditions, accessibility to affordable housing

Food and supply Security:

Many areas in the North qualify as food deserts. Food deserts are areas that lack access to affordable fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat milk, and other foods that make up a full and healthy diet. Many in the North are subjected to food deserts and may be unable to access affordable, healthy foods, leaving their diets lacking essential nutrients.

The real food-desert problem in Canada is largely hidden in Canada's rural north. The worst areas are in the Territories. Here people suffer from "food insecurity issues" and depend largely on packaged foods high in sodium, sugar and trans fats.

- 12% of the people in NWT are food insecure compared to 6% of Albertans, according to a Conference Board of Canada report.
- Lack of access to nutritious food leads to higher instances of chronic illnesses such as obesity, anemia, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and depression.
- The Canadian government has a legal obligation to deal with food security and it is shockingly high in the North.

Natural Areas:

Water and land areas generally associated with wildlife and ecological features, such as waterways, wetlands, open space and parks, forests and trees, farms or gardens. Opportunities for physical activity and social interaction.

Community Characteristics:

Range from the availability of amenities and retail to build environment infrastructure issues to the level of community services.

- Access to affordable healthy food
- Infrastructure improvements
- Resource availability
- Availability of community services
- Access to amenities
- Green space

Social Cohesion:

Assesses how engaged and connected community members are to each other and to the community itself. Socially cohesive communities provide:

- Important support systems
- Sense of belonging and well-being

Transportation:

- Connectivity
- Affordable and accessible transportation choices

Canada's North makes up 40% of Canada's land mass, one would think that the federal government would prioritize the protection, careful development and stewardship of the far north. A growing number of international experts are voicing concern that Canada is falling behind in terms of coherent policy and sustainable development of Canada's northern territory.

This federal government does not have a long-term strategy for the north. It doesn't think of the north as an economic opportunity and as something it should be paying attention to and investing in for the long-term future of Canada.

We respectfully ask that we be provided the opportunity to discuss the following:

- Federal acknowledgement of impacts of climate change on the Sahtu Region and on all Community Health Indicators
- Acknowledgement of federal and territorial responsibility for finding solutions (short, mid and long term)
- ***Federal and territorial support for an affordable and accessible all season transportation route up the Mackenzie Valley.***