

Supplementary Estimates, No. 4, 2018-2019 Slave Geological Province Road

March 13, 2019

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. On the same page, there is \$74,000 for Slave Geological Province Corridor. Can someone tell me what that money is for and whether it's going to get spent by March 31st? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Stewart.

MR. STEWART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In terms of the O and M money for this activity, I believe it's related to a variety of activities to help prepare for the planning related to the Slave Geological Province, including some work done by ITI for economic impacts and those sorts of things, and then I think there is some work planned that may be by 2019-2020 by ENR related to wildlife studies as well as work being done by Infrastructure for activities that are not capitalized in terms of the Slave Geological Province. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I am certainly confused by this. This money, is it going to be carried over? I didn't think you could carry over O and M. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Kalgutkar.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is my understanding that the two departments impacted by 2018-2019 are going to be spending all their money. To answer the Member's question on whether we carry over O and M funding, if O and M funding does lapse, we have in the past carried it over into 2019-2020 through a supp process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Is this the supp process, or is it going to come forward in a different supp? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Kalgutkar.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If the departments are unable to spend all the \$74,000 that could be approved in this supp, then whatever is left over and whatever is lapsed by the departments will be carried over into the first supp in 2019-2020. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think we have a 2019-2020 supp, which is going to come up next. How can we be carrying over money into that one when this hasn't even been spent yet? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Stewart.

MR. STEWART: Thanks, Mr. Chair. If there was a need to carry over, there would be an additional supplementary appropriation in the May/June session. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. This funding is coming from the federal government. Is there a requirement for any matching funding from GNWT? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Stewart.

MR. STEWART: Thanks, Mr. Chair. The matching GNWT portion for 2018-2019 is \$15,600 from ITI and \$3,000 from Infrastructure on the O and M side. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I am going to leave this one alone, but it is going to come back. It is Slave Geological Province Road money, I think, under the 2019-2020 supps. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair, my apologies. Can someone tell me whether there is any matching funding required from GNWT to have this work go ahead? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Stewart.

MR. STEWART: Thanks, Mr. Chair. For 2019-2020 operations funding, there will be \$37,000 worth of GNWT funding for the contribution to include the federal share. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Which departments are contributing towards this funding? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Stewart.

MR. STEWART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. \$34,000 of that is from Environment and Natural Resources and \$3,000 from the Department of Infrastructure.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. What work is ENR doing, then, that's going to contribute towards the Slave Geological Province Road? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. We have provided a table to committee to try to respond to a number of questions that were asked during our briefing. The ENR money, wildlife studies include barren-ground caribou and grizzly bears, so it's just some wildlife studies that are going on. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I guess I'm trying to figure out here: is this ongoing activities within the department? Are resources being diverted from within ENR to support work on the Slave Geological Province Road? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. This is all very important work. We want to make sure that we cover all our bases, and I can assure that there's no money being diverted from any other department program that ENR offers to go towards the work on the Slave Geological Province. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Thanks to the Minister for that. Just for the record, I object in principle to ENR contributing towards the Slave Geological Province Road when there's no new money for the caribou crisis in the 2019 budget. It's just beyond belief to me that money is being used within the ENR department that should be working towards caribou protection to support a project that will ultimately take away from the range, the habitat of the caribou, when they're in a crisis position. This is just rather ironic to me, and I don't expect an answer or a response from you, Minister, but I just object, in principle, to us using money even within the ENR, even if it's federal money, for a project that will ultimately hurt caribou. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. The Minister would like to respond, so I will give him an opportunity. Minister.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. I do appreciate the opportunity to respond, and I note the Member's objection. I assured Members that there was no money being diverted from any other programs that ENR offers, and the money that's going towards this is to do our work on the wildlife. It's not going into the actual construction of the road, and I think we've made that quite clear. As I've directed my department to do, I have asked them to come forward. We have done some budgetary exercises for some of the work we need to do on the caribou as a result of the discussions with the Tlicho Government and the Yellowknives Dene First Nations. I've directed them to come forward with the plan and a budget for dollars because I had made commitments to our Aboriginal partners that we were going to do this. I just wanted an opportunity to say that there's not money coming out, actually, in our budget to go towards construction of the road. It's to go to the work that ENR is tasked to do. Thank you, Mr. Chair.