

**KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE**  
**Hydro Projects and Transmission Lines**  
**Committee of the Whole—2021-2022 Operating Budget Review**  
**Dept. of Infrastructure—March 2, 2021**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks. I just burned up two minutes with what I thought was a simple question, so I think I will move on. I have been here for over five years now. I have never seen a detailed cost estimate for the Taltson expansion project or the Slave Geological Province road. I heard the Minister or somebody say that there is supposed to be an updated cost estimate for Taltson in the first quarter of the new year. Can the Minister commit to sharing that cost estimate with standing committee? Yes or no? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's going to be a no because I don't know specifically what I committed to or what I said. I am not going to sit here and commit to something that I don't know whether it is shareable or not, so the answer is no. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I will be here three months from now asking for it. Is there an updated cost estimate being prepared for the Slave Geological Province road, or the road to Lockhart, or whatever the heck it's called now? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the Minister tell me when that study is going to be finished, and can she share it with standing committee? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am wasting some time here but without finding the right information, I am going to look to ADM Jenkins to see if he knows more information while I find that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Jenkins.

**MR. JENKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We have \$40 million in funding for the Slave Geological Province corridor. We are going through the environmental, regulatory, and other type of information-gathering, which would support regulatory applications. Obviously, we would have to look, as we go through this process, similar to Taltson, and look at the business case for the project. We don't have a time right now. We are looking at hopefully having a regulatory application in for the Lockhart All-Season Road

some time in the next year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Jenkins. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. This is more of a comment. We spent tens of millions of dollars on these two projects, and I, as a legislator, have not seen an updated cost estimate. I don't know what else I can say. That's just not good management. I will leave it at that. I want to ask about the strategic infrastructure line on page 243, \$667,000. Can someone tell me briefly what that is actually for? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The strategic infrastructure line, there's not a change in it from previous. It's due to unfunded positions and an increase of O and M spending. I am looking at it as no change, but I am going to look to ADM Brennan to just confirm. I see a difference here because there is a decrease of \$133,000. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The \$667,000 is \$560,000 for salary and about \$100,000 for O and M, including travel, some contracts, and materials and supplies. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate that concise response. I had understood that the department was doing some studies, research, cost estimates for small hydro projects close to some of the Tlicho communities, including Whati, Gameti, Wekweeti. Can someone tell me the status of that work? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to get ADM Jenkins to find that in his book really quickly and respond. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Jenkins.

**MR. JENKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. One project I can speak to quickly is the project for Gameti. We have done some hydrological monitoring on that since 2018 looking at doing a community-scale hydro power project. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Jenkins. Member.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Rather than eat the clock up here, can I get a commitment, then, from the Minister to share some more information about what that project is all about and whether there are any other mini hydro projects or work being done in the other Tlicho communities? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That's a yes. The ADM did speak about one of the projects. The other one we can share information on is the Whati

transmission line that is happening, as well. There are some projects that are taking place that the department will be able to provide an update as to where we are at with them. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate that commitment from the Minister. The Whati transmission line, though, has nothing to do with mini hydro. It's about bringing Snare power over to Whati at what I feel is an exorbitant cost. For the same cost, we could actually build mini hydro in three of the Tlicho communities and make them energy self-sufficient, but we will have that discussion later. Just a couple more clean-up questions if I can. My colleague from Deh Cho asked about research and development. Can someone confirm whether there is actually any research and development capacity within the Department of Infrastructure for biomass? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Some of the things that we are doing for alternative renewable energy research is funding used for academic leading-edge research and development of push technology, but without going any further, that's as much as I know on research and development. I will ask ADM Jenkins to see if he can give further information on R and D. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Jenkins.

**MR. JENKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we do have engineers, and we have some art people in the division. They do a lot of work. As an early adopter and now a leader in the use of biomass for heating across the territory, we have actually been contacted by territorial and provincial agencies in terms of our expert technical input into projects in other jurisdictions. Thank you, Madam Chair.