

Tulita R.R.C. Frederick Andrew Jr.

Speech for the Tulita Renewable Resource Council to the Mackenzie Valley Review Board

Delivered at the Technical Session Meeting regarding the Mackenzie Valley Highway Project

Introduction

Good morning, members of the Mackenzie Valley Review Board, project representatives, and fellow participants.

My name is Frederick Andrew, I am the President of the Tulita Renewable Resource Council and I am here today representing the TRRC. On behalf of our Council and the people of Tulita, I want to thank you for the opportunity to address this important project.

The TRRC's Role and Mandate

The Tulita Renewable Resource Council was established under Chapter 13 of the *Sahtu Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement*. The Land Claim is a constitutionally protected agreement that provides the legal framework for the governance and management of lands, resources, and rights within the Sahtu Settlement Area.

Specifically, the Renewable Resource Councils, as outlined in **Section 13.9**, are the primary community-based organizations responsible for managing renewable resources at the local level. Under **Section 13.9.2**, the RRCs have the authority to make recommendations on wildlife harvesting, land use, and conservation measures to protect the environment. Furthermore, **Section 13.9.3** empowers the RRCs to monitor, enforce, and assist with the implementation of land use and conservation plans, ensuring the sustainable use of renewable resources in their respective areas.

The TRRC's role is to uphold these powers and responsibilities, balancing the need for economic development with the preservation of our land, wildlife, and traditional way of life.

Our Support for the Mackenzie Valley Highway Project

The TRRC is generally supportive of the Mackenzie Valley Highway Project, recognizing its potential to bring significant economic opportunities and infrastructure improvements to the Sahtu Region. However, our support is contingent upon meaningful engagement with our Council and the assurance that we will play a direct and significant role in the project through the provision of wildlife and environmental monitors.

Request for the TRRC to Provide Wildlife and Environmental Monitors

To ensure the project aligns with the principles of the Land Claim and addresses community concerns, the TRRC formally requests to be hired to provide wildlife and environmental monitoring services for the duration of the project.

Today, we are asking both the Mackenzie Valley Review Board and the Government of the Northwest Territories for an explicit and formal commitment to engage the Tulita Renewable Resource Council and hire our wildlife and environmental monitors for this project. This commitment is essential to ensuring that the environmental and social impacts of the highway project are managed responsibly and in alignment with the priorities of the Tulita community.

Such a commitment will demonstrate respect for the governance framework established under the Land Claim, uphold the principle of local involvement in resource management, and set a precedent for meaningful collaboration between project proponents and Indigenous communities.

Reasons for Our Involvement

1. Legal Mandate and Authority

The TRRC's request is firmly rooted in the legal framework of the Land Claim. As per **Section 13.9.4**, Renewable Resource Councils have the authority to act as a liaison between government, industry, and the community on matters of resource management. This authority positions the TRRC as the ideal body to oversee wildlife and environmental monitoring during the highway project.



2. Not-for-Profit and Community-Driven Values

As a not-for-profit organization, the TRRC is not motivated by commercial interests. Our focus is on protecting the environment, representing the interests of the community, and ensuring that the principles of sustainability guide all activities on our lands.

3. Trained Monitors and Operational Readiness

The TRRC has a team of trained and qualified wildlife and environmental monitors ready to be employed for this project. We also have the necessary vehicles and equipment to support efficient and effective monitoring operations. This readiness ensures the project will benefit from strong environmental oversight from the outset.

4. Traditional Knowledge and Local Expertise

The TRRC integrates traditional knowledge, as emphasized in **Section 13.1.1(a)** of the Land Claim, which recognizes the importance of Indigenous knowledge in managing renewable resources. This ensures that the project is guided not only by scientific standards but also by the wisdom and practices of those who have lived on the land for generations.

5. Commitment to Sustainability

Our mandate is to protect the land and its resources for future generations. Engaging the TRRC ensures that environmental stewardship remains a top priority, safeguarding ecosystems while enabling responsible development.

6. Employment and Capacity Building

By hiring the TRRC, the project can create meaningful employment opportunities for local residents, build community capacity, and strengthen the ability of the Tulita District to participate in and benefit from regional development projects that result from the completion of the highway.

7. Alignment with the Sahtu Dene and Métis Land Claim Agreement

Section 13.1.1(b) highlights the importance of local community involvement in renewable resource management. Hiring the TRRC directly supports this goal and ensures the project aligns with the broader objectives of the ~~SMCICA~~ Land Claim.

Conclusion

The Mackenzie Valley Highway Project has the potential to bring lasting benefits to the Sahtu Region, but it must be implemented with care and respect for the environment and the communities it impacts. By explicitly committing to engage the Tulita Renewable Resource Council and employing our monitors, the Mackenzie Valley Review Board and GNWT can ensure this project is conducted in a responsible and collaborative manner.

We are prepared, equipped, and legally mandated to fulfill this role, ensuring that traditional knowledge and community concerns are integrated at every stage of the project. Thank you for your time and consideration.