

Government of
Northwest Territories

February 01, 2025

DENNY RODGERS
MLA, INUVIK BOOT LAKE**Oral Question 374-20(1) Mackenzie Valley Fibre Line Backup**

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question you raised on October 29, 2024, regarding the redundancy of the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link (MVFL). During our exchange, I committed to providing a status update with respect to activities underway to improve redundancy of the MVFL.

The path of fibre telecommunications in the North is made up of several networks. The GNWT owned, MVFL runs south from Inuvik, eventually terminating in McGill Lake. The MVFL has recently been connected to the Dempster Fibre Line owned by the Yukon Government which connects the fibre line from Inuvik, along the Dempster Highway, ending in Dawson, Yukon. In Dawson, the Dempster connects to the existing Northwestel network from Dawson to Whitehorse, onto Watson Lake and ending in Fort Nelson. Should an outage occur between McGill Lake and Inuvik, access to the Dempster line has now improved redundancy through the ability to redirect MVFL traffic down the Yukon line.

In addition to the improved redundancy from the completion of the Dempster fibre line, the GNWT is negotiating an improved Indefeasible Rights of Use (IRU) agreement with Northwestel that provides data transmission over an incremental fibre line between the MVFL originally terminating at McGill Lake to High Level, Alberta. The new second path which is under consideration will be from McGill Lake, through Fort Nelson, and Fort St. John, BC, ending in Edmonton, Alberta. The improved reliability from this enhancement will further minimize disruptions to the fibre telecommunications service should outages occur.

Once completed, access to both IRU fibre lines will be provided to existing MVFL customers with opportunities for transmission of their data to improve reliability through redundancy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Wawzonek'.

Caroline Wawzonek
Minister of Finance

- c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Director, Legislative Affairs and House Planning