



January 24, 2023

The Honourable Tony Dean
Senator for Ontario and Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security
Defence, and Veteran Affairs
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
Email address: SECD@sen.parl.gc.ca

Follow-up to October 6, 2022 Meeting

Dear Senator Dean,

On behalf of the Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC), I would like to extend my gratitude to yourself and your fellow members of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security, Defense and Veteran Affairs for meeting with our delegation on October 6, 2022 in Inuvik. It was a pleasure to share a meal, get to know each other and discuss our respective priorities for Arctic investment and security.

As I shared in my remarks, the GTC looks forward to the increased economic activity that will be afforded to our communities as a result of the federal government's NORAD Modernization Plan and other critical improvements to Arctic defense and sovereignty. We welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively to address threats to the Arctic while advancing several priorities I shared such as fulfilling infrastructure needs; expanding responsible mineral exploration; reducing the cost of living and energy for our residents; and improving the access to and the quality of medical services. Targeted federal investments can position the Gwich'in to transition from merely surviving to truly thriving in our communities. Increased access and travel to the Arctic will increase consumption of Gwich'in tourism ventures, a keen interest for the GTC and its business arm, the Gwich'in Development Corporation (GDC).

Currently, the GTC and GDC are positioning to fully leverage the exciting significant investments that are expected to land in the North in the near future. We are pursuing funding opportunities to develop a strategic economic development plan, a regional energy plan, a tourism pilot project, and housing and infrastructure assessment. These plans will enable us to make informed strategic decisions in the Gwich'in Settlement Area with the overarching goal of improving the quality of life for our people by addressing the socio-economic challenges; improving mental health outcomes; contributing to cultural continuity; managing climate change; and securing these critical elements for future generations.

During our meeting, Committee members indicated a willingness to work with us to advance some of our objectives such as establishing an introductory meeting with the team at Plan Nord to see if a similar entity can be established in the Northwest Territories. Committee members were willing to connect our team with the appropriate leaders in Ottawa and it would be ideal to stay in contact. I do plan to be in Ottawa the week of February 27 to March 3 for the Land Claim Agreements Coalition annual convention. Please have your committee staff reach out to our Chief Executive Officer, Angela Tripathy (via email: Angela.Tripathy@gwichintribal.ca or by phone: 867-678-0651) to explore what mutual opportunities exist to meet. Our Manager of Government Affairs, Susan Laramee, has also followed up with your Committee's Procedural Clerk, Ericka Dupont since our October 6th meeting.

Together, we have much important work to do. I look forward to the Committee's report next spring and wish to continue to build our relationship for the benefit of all Canadians and our Gwich'in Nation.

Mahsi for your time,

Regards,



Ken Kyikavichik
Grand Chief

cc. Roy Erasmus Jr., GDC Chief Executive Officer
Angela Tripathy, GTC Chief Executive Officer
Susan Laramee, GTC Manager of Government Affairs