



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

January 17, 2024

The Honourable Nathaniel Erskine-Smith
Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities

Sent via email: minister-ministre@infcc.gc.ca

Dear Minister Erskine-Smith,

We urge you to expand and extend existing programs such as the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) and the Indigenous Community Infrastructure Fund (ICIF). These successful programs are on the verge of sunseting and the sudden disappearance of infrastructure funding will be deeply felt in Nunavut. As Canada's only Indigenous-majority jurisdiction, Nunavut continues to experience chronic underfunding by the federal government. This is an intolerable situation and must be immediately addressed.

Indigenous and northern communities are at the front lines of climate change, and the challenges of that reality are compounded by the lack of long-term Federal funding to build and maintain infrastructure. In Nunavut specifically, prolonged federal underfunding has left communities without necessary infrastructure such as the roads, airports, marinas, and more.

Every community depends on infrastructure to support the delivery of services and their economy. Long-term stable funding enables communities to develop and build capacity. They provide services such as healthcare, transportation, and housing. In a region where the cost of living is already so high and the logistical barriers to construction are immense, having reliable stable investments in infrastructure is key to improving the quality of life and supporting economic growth.

Nunavut Inuit still have the highest rates of food insecurity, some of the worst health care outcomes, no roads, and the slowest internet. These huge infrastructure gaps are there by design. They are the result of decades of under-investments. Infrastructure needs are growing, and the size and scale of the gaps can only be filled with sustainable funding. Currently, the short-term funding model used for infrastructure projects in Nunavut does not meet the challenges on the ground for these communities.

Minister, what your government has done for Nunavut is not enough. Nunavummiut deserve better. Chronic underfunding of the territory means Canadians are going without. They are without

safe, adequate housing, internet access, transportation, and community services. This is why we urgently appeal to you to meet your obligation to improve the lives of all Canadians.

Your government has committed to closing the Indigenous Infrastructure Gap by 2030 and has stated that the Indigenous people of Canada are your most important relationship.

Providing infrastructure capacity will help unlock the tremendous economic potential that exists for Inuit and contribute towards Arctic sovereignty and security. Right now, federal investments are failing Nunavut. Nunavummiut are disproportionately affected by underinvestment's infrastructure. The Inuit deserve the fundamental equity that other communities in Canada already enjoy.

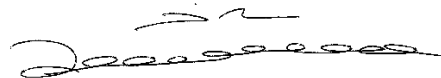
Minister, we implore you to be bold and do the right thing for Nunavummiut. Do not leave them behind.

The federal government has a vital role in ensuring these communities build the capacity to continue developing their own infrastructure.

Sincerely,



Bonita Zarrillo, MP
Port Moody—Coquitlam
NDP Critic for Disability Inclusion
NDP Critic for Infrastructure and Communities
NDP Deputy Critic for Health



Lori Idlout, MP
Nunavut
NDP Critic for Crown-Indigenous Relations