

STATEMENT



For Immediate Release

Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. Provide Roadmap to Securing Canada's Arctic Sovereignty and Security

(March 4, 2025 - Iqaluit, Nunavut) Nunavut Premier P.J. Akeeagok and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) President Jeremy Tunraluk stated their shared priorities for nation-building infrastructure to address Canada's Arctic sovereignty and security needs in Nunavut.

"Nunavut stands together with other territories and provinces in opposing any threats to Canada's sovereignty and security," said Premier Akeeagok. "We know what's at stake for the Canadian Arctic and Inuit Nunangat, and we know that Nunavut needs to be united and strategic to respond to the challenges before us."

The Government of Nunavut (GN) and NTI recognize the heightened geopolitical tensions globally which has resulted in national and international attention to security and sovereignty in the Arctic. Both parties play roles to protect the rights of and promote the socio-economic well-being of Nunavummiut and Nunavut Inuit respectively. This includes asserting Canada's sovereignty over the land and waters of the Arctic Archipelago.

"Inuit historical and continuous use and occupancy have provided the strongest support for Canadian sovereignty claims in the Arctic," said President Tunraluk. "Investments in infrastructure, food sovereignty, Inuktut and higher education and the formalization of the Canadian Rangers, will greatly enhance the security and well-being of the Arctic region. Thriving Inuit communities will ensure perpetual use and occupancy of the Canadian Arctic."

During these uncertain times, the GN and NTI are trusted partners for long-term investments that meet Arctic sovereignty and security needs. The GN and NTI are aligned in the message that nation-building infrastructure projects in Nunavut must be expedited.

To this end, NTI and the GN are forming a working group to develop a made-in-Nunavut Arctic sovereignty and security strategy.

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Nunavut's Arctic communities continue to secure Canada's sovereignty in the region. However, the historic lack of critical infrastructure makes Inuit, Nunavut and Canada vulnerable to Arctic security and international threats.

"Inuit families have endured significant hardships, including forced relocation, for the sake of Canada's sovereignty," said President Tunraluk, "This enormous sacrifice should never be forgotten, and Inuit should never again be used with such inhumanity and disregard."

Given today's global landscape, and the centrality of circumpolar issues, significant investments in the Arctic are required to meet local community needs, forge opportunities for economic development, address reconciliation and Canada's geopolitical interests in Arctic sovereignty and security.

"Together, we are calling on the Government of Canada to back Inuit-led nation-building initiatives that can be expedited as they have the backing of regional Inuit associations and local communities," said Premier Akeeagok. "By using available legislative tools, with stakeholder support, the federal government can accelerate the start of construction on these critical projects."

Unlocking Nunavut's economic potential in critical minerals, energy, fisheries and Inuit knowledge through these nation-building infrastructure projects will not only benefit our territory, but it will also bolster economic opportunities across Canada as Nunavut is entirely dependent on southern jurisdictions for materials from lumber and steel to fuel.

"While Nunavut has come far in the past 25 years, transformative investments are needed to tap into our territory's full potential," said Premier Akeeagok. "Now more than ever before, Canada must extend nation building efforts to our third and longest coast."

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Nation-building infrastructure priorities

Qikiqtarjuaq Port – A deep-water port at Qikiqtarjuaq is a long-standing priority for the Government of Nunavut to improve marine infrastructure, reduce supply chain vulnerabilities, and support offshore fisheries. By providing critical Arctic infrastructure, the port supports national security, search-and-rescue (SAR) operations, and maritime defense. The Qikiqtarjuaq port reduces Nunavut's dependency on foreign ports and strengthens Canada's Arctic marine logistics. The port also enhances Canada's seafood supply chain, ensuring access to sustainably harvested Arctic fisheries.

Arctic Security Corridor/Grays Bay Road and Port Project – The Grays Bay Road and Port is a 230 km all-weather road and port linking Nunavut to the Northwest Territories, unlocking access to mineral-rich regions. This project will bolster the terrestrial connection to the Arctic Ocean, opening opportunities for mining of critical minerals to meet Canada's growing need for responsibly sourced rare earth elements and battery metals, which are essential for clean energy and defence applications. It will also be the only deepwater port in the western archipelago on or near the Northwest Passage, which will become more significant as the Arctic Ocean sees a longer ice-free season and increased shipping traffic.

Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Link – This is a 1,200 km high-voltage transmission line connecting Manitoba's hydroelectric grid and high-speed internet to five Kivalliq communities: Arviat, Whale Cove, Rankin Inlet, Chesterfield Inlet, and Baker Lake. The project will include over 370 km of medium voltage 'feeder' lines and will be Nunavut's first infrastructure link to southern Canada. The system will provide 150 megawatts (MW) of capacity and at least 1,200 gigabits per second (Gbps) of fibre-optic bandwidth, ensuring sustainable power and broadband access for generations to come. The KHFL reduces Nunavut's reliance on diesel, cutting carbon emissions by 380,000 metric tonnes annually—a major contribution to Canada's Net-Zero 2050 goals.

Iqaluit Hydroelectric Project – This Qikiqtani Inuit Association-led project initiated in 2005 is a long-term plan to supply a sustainable, affordable and reliable source of energy in Nunavut's capital. This nation-building project would decrease Nunavut's carbon footprint, reduce our territory's reliance on diesel fuel, and provide Nunavut's capital with a renewable energy supply. Iqaluit Hydroelectric would signal a decisive move towards clean energy and self-sufficiency for Nunavut.

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Key facts:

- Nunavut is 2.09 million km²– twice the size of Ontario
- Nunavut has the longest coastline in Canada at approximately 38,000 km
- Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) is the political body in the territory representing Nunavut Inuit. NTI is responsible for the social, cultural and economic advancement of Inuit through full and fair implementation of the Nunavut Agreement
- Nunavut was established as a territory of Canada in 1999
- The Nunavut Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement was signed by GN, NTI and Canada on January 18, 2024, transferring decision-making powers from Canada to Nunavut.