

Ms. Alexis Campbell  
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December 10, 2025

**VIA EMAIL**

Náhkale Ms. Campbell;

**Land Use Permit MV2023L8-0007 (NWT Highway 1, km 278 - 800) Pre-submission Engagement:**

Délne Got'ne Government (DGG) has received your letter of November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025. This letter reiterates the position provided to Mr. Hernandez in our November 2023 letter, to which we did not receive a GNWT response. I remind the GNWT that there is a purpose to engagement, and the GNWT has a responsibility to attempt to understand and accommodate to the extent demonstrably possible, the legitimate concerns of affected rights-holders.

**Part A – Current Operations:**

As articulated in previous correspondence, the DGG does not have objections to a permit or license amendment for the current year (2025/26) winter road. Our community depends on the winter road, and our interest is in effective and safe operations. However, this position requires further comment from DGG, and further action from the GNWT.

**Part B – Future Operations:**

The current route crosses Great Bear Lake. As the GNWT is aware from the several conversations I have had with GNWT ministers, the residents and leadership of Délne have deep, long-standing concerns that this route is becoming increasingly unsafe. Fundamentally, it puts at risk the environmental well-being of Great Bear Lake, and the economic, social, and cultural livelihoods and lifeways of our people.

As GNWT knows, due to its pristine nature and critical importance, Great Bear Lake is a UNESCO recognized site. This designation means it has been identified as a natural area of importance to all of humanity.

And more importantly, Great Bear Lake is the heart of our people. The ongoing risks posed by the winter road route to the health and utility of Great Bear Lake has not been acceptable to DGG for many years. The GNWT has been made aware of this at the officials and political levels. It is long past the time that our two governments must collaboratively advance the effort to adjust the Délne Winter Road so that it is no longer across Great Bear Lake. Your government is in possession of information about an alternative route acceptable to the community. Continuing to impose the Lake-based route must be considered in the context of the significance of the risks this poses, and their expected consequences, and the probability of occurrence.



# Délne Got'ne Government

Our People. Our Future. Our Délne.

1. Great Bear Lake is the core of our way of life, and accidents or contamination must be avoided at all costs. The consequences cannot be overstated. DGG is taking this principle as self-evident, but if there is any doubt on GNWT Infrastructure Department's part, we encourage you to discuss this matter with GNWT colleagues to gather information. Should there be any residual uncertainty, please contact Gina Bayha, Director of Lands, Resources, and Environment, and she or her designated staff will respond to any additional questions.
2. Our environment is changing rapidly, and infrastructure such as the winter road that rely on freezing conditions and natural infrastructure, such as permafrost, which is no longer reliable, must be re-evaluated. Incidents on the winter road route, and on the section across the lake have already occurred. This included a tanker truck going through the ice on the road close to the community. We have collectively been lucky to date, but the probability of further and more serious accidents and incidents is increasing, with the winter road season becoming shorter and its dependability more unpredictable. Indicators of these trends, and associated risks, are self-evident.

The risk associated with accidents is growing. Each year the status quo is relied on, is another year that places our citizens at risk. Délne leaders and officials have been raising this issue with the GNWT since at least July of 2009, with little response or meaningful mitigation. The DGG is seeking a fulsome discussion of this matter with the GNWT, as another unusual climate year has forced us all to think about adapting to the warming environment.

For the purposes of this application, DGG requests that:

- a) Minister McKay and his Deputy Minister and other responsible officials, meet with the DGG leadership and officials, and bring new or alternative options to the status quo; and,
- b) GNWT will voluntarily provide (as part of the application), or Délne will ask the Board to require, the compilation of past engagements and submission of an engagement log for the winter road. This historical background will help GNWT and DGG review the chronology of discussions over the past 15 years and provide a foundation for future decision making.

Please contact Gina Bayha ([gina.bayha@gov.deline.ca](mailto:gina.bayha@gov.deline.ca)) Director of Lands, Resources and Environment, for coordinating next steps.

Máhsí,

Danny Gaudet  
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cc. Tyree Mullaney, MVLWB [tyree@mvlwb.com](mailto:tyree@mvlwb.com)  
Minister Vince McKay, Department of Infrastructure