



EAST-WEST ALL-SEASON ROAD ROUTE RECOMMENDED

Proposed Route to Limit Environmental Impact

Manitoba's East Side Road Authority (ESRA) announced recently it was recommending an east-west all-season road linking the Island Lake and Northern Cree communities to PR 373.

"As we saw this past March, large quantities of goods had to be flown into the communities that relied on the north-south winter road when the winter road failed," said Eric Robinson,

Minister responsible for the East Side Road Authority. "An all-season road will provide reliable transportation to these communities. The recommended east-west route makes sense because it meets the needs of local people while limiting the impact on the environment. In particular, the east-west link is shorter than the north-south winter road which will reduce travel times for local residents."

Based on early results, ESRA has recommended an east-west route that involves a Y-junction north of Molson Lake. One branch will lead northeast to Bunibonabee Cree Nation, Manto Sipi Cree Nation and God's Lake First Nation. The other will lead southeast to Red Sucker Lake, Garden Hill, Wasagamack and St. Theresa Point First Nations. For the western end of the route, ESRA is recommending building the link to Norway House Cree Nation initially, with future consideration for a second link through Cross Lake First Nation. Approximately 88 per cent of the route is located on or near the existing winter road alignments, reducing the need to disturb more boreal forest.

"A large portion of the route is located on or near existing winter roads, which will limit the environmental impact on previously undisturbed lands," said Ernie Gilroy, CEO of ESRA. "Over the next number of months, we will be moving forward with the planning, engineering, and environmental assessment work for the road. We thank the local communities for their input in this process and look forward to working with them to build the road."

As part of the East Side Transportation Initiative, ESRA hired SNC Lavalin to study potential all-season route options for the northern portion of the East Side of Lake Winnipeg. The study presented ten different route options to local residents through a public engagement process that included two rounds of meetings in each community and meetings with Chiefs and councils. Through this process, all of the communities in the region expressed a desire for an east-west route over a north-south all-season road route.

The Manitoba Government has approved ESRA's business plan which calls for an investment of \$1.125 billion over the next fifteen years to build the all-season road. Discussions with the federal government regarding federal participation in the project are currently underway.

For more information, please contact the ESRA at 204-945-4900; toll free 1-866-356-6355; or visit www.eastsideroadauthority.mb.ca.

