



For Immediate Release

Northern Policy Institute commentary finds northern highway costs greater than those in the South

January 22, 2019 – Have you ever driven down a highway riddled with potholes and wondered how it got to this state or why it has not been fixed? The short answer to these questions is the high price tag attached to building and maintaining highways. Northern Policy Institute provides insight on this topic with their latest commentary, *Connecting Our Communities: the Comparative Costs of Highway Construction* by Winter Lipscombe.

The commentary examines the per-kilometre construction costs of highways across the northern and southern regions of Manitoba and Ontario and what factors may affect those costs. The author investigates whether remoteness and length in kilometres of a highway project affects the overall cost of that project, and the implications of those costs.

“It is important to explore Northern Ontario highway infrastructure because \$1.24 billion in goods are transported along the North’s highways each year.” writes Lipscombe. “Events decreasing the flows of traffic result in costly delays, and these events could be minimized through improved transportation infrastructure. Understanding the underlying costs of infrastructure enables us to better allocate resources.”

Calculations determined that the average cost of highway per kilometre is higher in the northern regions of Manitoba and Ontario than in their southern counterparts. Lipscombe also concludes that the length of the project in kilometres has a greater impact on cost than the remoteness of the project’s location.

The commentary concludes that there are two key points that the Ontario government should consider:

1. Twinning of the highways at identified key areas where transportation flows can be impacted due to lane closures (e.g., accidents, weather) and where there are safety risks (e.g., minimal areas for passing). Highway closures pose safety and economic concerns for travellers.
2. Maintaining a project’s length between 15 and 30 kilometres where there appears to be the best value per kilometre. By ensuring a greater valuation per kilometre, infrastructure dollars can be further invested.

To read the full commentary, visit www.northernpolicy.ca/costofhighways



Media Interviews: Author Winter Lipscombe, and NPI's Research Coordinator, Rachel Beals are both available for comment.

To arrange an interview, please contact:
Christine St-Pierre
Communications & Outreach Officer
705-677-5663
cstpierre@northernpolicy.ca

About Northern Policy Institute:

Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent think tank. We perform research, collect and disseminate evidence, and identify policy opportunities to support the growth of sustainable Northern communities. Our operations are located in Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, and Sudbury. We seek to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts Northern Ontario, Ontario, and Canada as a whole.

About the author:

Winter Lipscombe was born and raised in the community of Kenora, ON and was a past *Experience North* summer placement at Northern Policy Institute. She is in her final year at Mount Allison University, working towards an Honours Bachelor of Arts in International Relations with double minors in Economics and Political Science. Winter has had experience working as a research assistant considering the impact of borders in a globalized world. Her past experiences have also included work with several First Nation organizations. While she enjoys learning about nations abroad, she looks forward to researching the implications of policies closer to home and their unique implications on the North.