For Immediate Release

Smart Road Technology Can Make Northern Roads Safer

October 14, 2022 – Implementing smart road technologies can encourage greater safety on Northern roads and are less expensive to build and maintain. These technologies and innovative construction techniques are explored in detail in the latest paper by Northern Policy Institute, *Smart Solutions for Northern Roads* by William Dunstan.

Smart road technologies implemented in other jurisdictions have proven effective at reducing collisions. Automatic anti-icing installations and weather-adjusted speed limits can reduce winter driving hazards. Advanced speed camera systems can monitor and reduce speeding on extended sections of roads. Fewer collisions mean fewer fatalities and fewer road closures that limit Northern Ontarians' access to communities, services, and other resources. Crucially, all three technologies have been shown to offer benefits that exceed their implementation costs.

"We don't need to invent anything new to make our highways safer", said author William Dunstan, "proven and cost-effective solutions already exist."

Moreover, innovative technologies offer opportunities to improve the basic construction of roads. Several variants of "self-healing road surfaces" allow the road surface to repair itself as it deteriorates, reducing maintenance costs and related traffic disruptions.

As climate change continues to shorten the winter road season, new all-season roads may be needed to maintain access to critical supplies for isolated communities in the Far North. "Mat roads" that use wooden mats to cross muskeg while using traditional gravel roads on higher ground could halve construction costs for all-season roads.

To improve road safety in the North, the Ontario government should implement proven smart road technologies on many sections of highways. Furthermore, government support ought to be provided for further research and trials to assist the development of equally promising but less proven road construction techniques.

Want to learn more, read the report here: https://www.northernpolicy.ca/smart-roads

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Media Interviews: Senior Policy Analyst, Bryanne Rocha and author William Dunstan are available for comment. To arrange an interview, please contact:

Lalit Bhojwani
Media & Marketing Officer
1-807-343-8812
lbhojwani@northernpolicy.ca

About the author:

William Dunstan is a Bachelor of Public Affairs and Policy Management student at Carleton University, set to graduate in June 2022. During his undergraduate studies, William learned about the wide world of public policy and developed a particular research interest in economic policy and regional development. Professionally, he has worked in several policy-related roles both in the think tank sphere and with the federal government. Originally from Ottawa, William developed a love for Northeastern (or Central) Ontario and the region's high quality of living during his time as an Experience North intern in 2021.

About Northern Policy Institute:

Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent, evidence-driven think tank. We perform research, analyze data, and disseminate ideas. Our permanent offices are in Thunder Bay, Sudbury, and Kirkland Lake. Our mission is to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts our communities, our province, our country, and our world.

About Experience North:

Every summer, Northern Policy Institute makes available up to ten four-month placements across Northern Ontario. Usually housed with a partner organization in one of Ontario's Central, Western or Northern Regions, the placements learn first-hand about the cut and thrust of public policy debate, building human capital and experience in the North.

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This report was written as a part of William's summer internship in 2022.