



Office of the Minister
PO Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

October 7, 2026

Hon. Julie Dabrusin
Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature, Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

via email: julie.dabrusin@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Dabrusin:

RE: Diesel exhaust fluid sensor requirements in northern Canada

I am writing regarding the impact of diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) sensor requirements on the safe and reliable operation of diesel-powered vehicles and equipment in extreme northern conditions.

On April 22, 2026, the Yukon Legislative Assembly unanimously adopted Motion No. 110, urging the Government of Canada to enhance safety and reliability in severe cold weather by exempting diesel equipment operators in Yukon from DEF sensor requirements.

The Government of Yukon supports efforts to reduce emissions and recognizes the important role DEF systems play in reducing nitrogen oxide emissions from diesel engines. However, the experience of northern equipment operators has demonstrated challenges with these systems in extreme cold.

During the winter months, temperatures across the Yukon can often fall below -40°C in remote areas where services and assistance are limited. When DEF sensors or related components malfunction, engine protection systems can reduce vehicle power or otherwise restrict operation. In southern or urban environments, these failures may primarily result in delays and equipment downtime. In remote northern conditions, the consequences can be much more serious.

Highway maintenance crews, emergency responders, commercial carriers, fuel and water delivery services, construction crews and others providing essential services depend on reliable diesel equipment. A vehicle that loses power or mobility in extreme cold can leave people

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stranded, delay critical services and create significant risks for operators and the travelling public.

These concerns are particularly acute on remote routes such as the Dempster Highway, where distances between communities and services are considerable, and assistance may not be immediately available.

The Government of Yukon has taken steps within its own fleet to reduce winter equipment failures, including operator training, proactive fleet management, and investments in temperature-controlled storage. These measures can improve reliability, but they do not eliminate the challenges associated with DEF sensor and emissions-control systems in extreme cold.

I am therefore asking the Government of Canada to work with the Yukon and other northern jurisdictions to examine an exemption, or another appropriate regulatory accommodation, from DEF sensor-related operating restrictions for diesel equipment used in Yukon.

I also encourage Environment, Climate Change and Nature to work with its federal partners, northern governments, industry, manufacturers and equipment experts to examine the safety implications of these systems in severe cold and identify a solution that maintains environmental objectives while recognizing the realities of northern operations.

Northern operators should not be placed in a situation where the failure of an emissions-control sensor creates a greater immediate risk to human safety than the issue the system is intended to address. Canada's regulatory approach must recognize the unique operating conditions faced in northern and Arctic regions.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further and work with Canada on a practical solution that supports both environmental objectives and the safe, reliable delivery of essential services in the North.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "L. Benoit". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and a stylized "Benoit".

Hon. Linda Benoit

Minister of Highways and Public Works

cc. Hon. Currie Dixon, Premier
Hon. Wade Istchenko, Minister of Environment