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## **MILLIONS OF DOLLARS APPROVED FOR LONG-TERM SHAKWAK FUNDING**

WHITEHORSE – The Government of Yukon will receive \$150 million (US) over the next five years from the United States government under the recently signed multi-billion dollar US transportation bill, Highways and Public Works Minister Glenn Hart announced today.

The legislation includes \$30 million (US) annually, from 2005 through to 2009, for the Yukon government to continue work on the Shakwak project. The money will fund additional reconstruction and upgrading of the North Alaska Highway and the Haines Road.

“This is very good news,” Hart said. “The Shakwak Agreement is of great regional importance to both Alaska and Yukon. It is an excellent example of co-operation between the United States and Canadian governments.”

President Bush signed the \$285 billion *Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users* (SAFETEA-LU) Bill to guarantee funding for federal highway, transit and safety programs.

Yukon will receive annual funding to complete the highway reconstruction along Sheep Mountain, to complete major bridge replacements at the Slims, Duke and Donjek rivers, and to begin paving.

“Now that funding is secure, the department will tender contracts to replace the Donjek River Bridge north of Burwash Landing this fall,” Hart added. “This is another step towards improving the transportation corridor between Yukon and Alaska which will save time and money for travelers, and provide substantial economic benefits to the territory.”

The Shakwak Agreement provides that the US fund 100 per cent of the reconstruction between the borders, at Pleasant Camp on the Haines Road, and north of Beaver Creek on the Alaska Highway. Canada provides the right-of-way, access to natural construction materials and highway maintenance.

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