



*Patron: His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston
C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D., Governor General of Canada*

*Président d'honneur : Son Excellence le très honorable David Johnston
C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D., Gouverneur général du Canada*

March 6, 2014

Hon. Brad Cathers
Minister of Community Services
& Government House Leader
Yukon Legislative Assembly
Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon
Y1A 2C6

Dear Minister Cathers,

As the national voice for the conservation of built heritage in Canada, Heritage Canada The National Trust is following with great concern the threatened demolition of the historic Ross River suspension bridge across the Pelly River. We understand that a contract for demolition was recently awarded.

This letter is to request your intervention to stop the demolition. This would be a positive and proactive next step. This action would allow for additional time for heritage conservation expertise to review the options for sustaining this important Yukon heritage and tourism asset. Additional time could also lead to concerted efforts to leverage alternate funding resources to support the bridge's conservation. We would be pleased to support those efforts, and have an initial suggestion below.

As I am sure you know, the Ross River Suspension Bridge is an exceptional example of engineering ingenuity, associated with Canada's participation in World War II. It was built in 1943 as part of the Canol pipeline system to supply the Allied war effort to the west coast of North America that was then under threat. CANOL, (for Canadian Oil), was one of the largest and most expensive construction projects of the war. The Alaska Highway was a necessary supply route and the Army and the construction companies needed fuel. The Ross River suspension bridge is 316 metres (1036 feet) long with a 192 metre (630 foot) span was an integral part of this supply line. As such, it is the longest suspension bridge of its kind in North America.

The Department of Canadian Heritage's recently announced Legacy Fund indicates the federal government's national priority for commemorating the 75th Anniversary of Canada's

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participation in World War II. The Legacy Fund can be applied to “the restoration, renovation, or transformation of existing buildings and/or exterior spaces with local community significance.” As one of this country’s remaining World War 2 era engineered structures, the Ross River Suspension Bridge would be a logical candidate for this.

We once again encourage the Government of Yukon to recognize the Territorial, local and national heritage significance of the Ross River Suspension Bridge and urge that strong consideration be given to stopping the current demolition order. Taking this action will give priority to proposals that will ensure its retention and continued use.

Thank you in advance for your intervention in this matter.

Yours sincerely,



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cc
Hon. Darrell Pasloski
Premier

Hon. Mike Nixon
Minister of Tourism and Culture

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