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Government commits to twinning Highway 63

Fort McMurray... Highway travel to one of the fastest-growing regions of the province will become safer and more efficient thanks to a government commitment to twin Highway 63.

Government will begin twinning the 240-kilometre highway between Fort McMurray and the junction of Highway 55 near Grassland this year, starting at the south end of Fort McMurray. The project will be completed as quickly as possible, subject to industry capacity, environmental impact assessments, and budget and surplus dollars.

"The importance of the oil sands near Fort McMurray continues to increase and by twinning Highway 63, Alberta is investing in the growth of this dynamic region," said Premier Ralph Klein. "Building infrastructure leading to the oil sands pays dividends for a stronger economy and the twinned highway will provide a safer transportation corridor for industry and residents of northeastern Alberta."

Work has already begun to clear the trees for the section of twinned highway from south of Fort McMurray to Highway 881, while engineering and planning work continues further south.

"Twinning Highway 63 will support the movement of goods, equipment and people for this rapidly growing region of the province and improve highway safety," said Dr. Lyle Oberg, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. "Completing this construction work as quickly as possible, starting this year, shows how important this highway improvement project is to government."

The cost of twinning the highway is estimated to be over \$650 million. Government has approached the federal government to share the cost under the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund - a program to which the federal government has committed \$150 million to Alberta.

Additional details will be announced following the release of the provincial budget and Capital Plan.

"As a longtime advocate for twinning Highway 63, I'm pleased that my constituents will have a safer roadway to travel and that industry will have the improved infrastructure they need for the continuing growth of the region," said Guy Boutilier, Environment Minister and MLA for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Government is also working on a comprehensive safety improvement plan for Highway 63 that will be announced in the coming weeks.

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