



MATAWA FIRST NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Matawa First Nations Chief Announces Deadline Following a Meeting with Ontario Ministers

Thunder Bay ON, August 24th, 2010- Matawa First Nations Chiefs representing their respective communities are looking for immediate resources following a meeting with three provincial ministers.

Matawa First Nations Chiefs gathered with Ministers Chris Bentley, Michael Gravelle, and Linda Jeffrey last week in Thunder Bay, Ontario, in attempt to secure much needed funding to better prepare their First Nations communities about the initiatives within the Ring of Fire.

The Chiefs brought forward a proposal that requested funding in four main areas which included Matawa Technical Support, a community budget to implement eight communications liaison officers, a Ring of Fire Coordinator budget, along with funding for the Matawa First Nations Technical Committee.

Constance Lake First Nation Chief Arthur Moore says; "It was a great disappointment that there wasn't any sort of tangible commitment from the Ministers in attendance. This funding is critical for our communities to move forward. No development of any kind will happen in the Matawa First Nations traditional territory unless each individual community is consulted and accommodated, and in order to do that, we need proper resources in place."

Funding has been provided in the past to support the Interim Mineral Measures Process- a document that provides guidelines on how communities interact with the mineral exploration and mining industry. Chief Moore states; "The IMMP is just a starting point for dialogue to begin and to bring First Nations and mineral companies together on some common understandings. In order to continue the process, our people need to be properly informed."





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The government announced in the 2010 Ontario budget that 45 million-dollars will be allocated over the next three years for a new project-based skills training program to help First Nations communities and northern Ontarians participate in economic development opportunities, such as the Ring of Fire. Chief Sonny Gagnon of Aroland First Nation says; “The funding announced isn’t specific enough. First Nations need to be more of a priority when it comes to development in the Ring of Fire. Our First Nations continue to work together, not only with the Matawa communities but with regional municipalities. It is time that these actions be supported and taken seriously.”

Chief Gagnon has set a deadline of September 15th, 2010 for the Ministers to respond to the Matawa First Nations Chiefs proposal. A request of 2.1 million-dollars was made to assist Matawa First Nations communities prepare for mining development in the Ring of Fire and surrounding area.

Chief Gagnon adds; “This isn’t the first time the province has seen this proposal, we presented it back in April. It isn’t new and should be acted on immediately.”

Chief Cornelius Wabasse of Webequie First Nation says; “It is well known the Ring of Fire mineral discoveries brings enormous challenges and opportunities to the First Nations communities who will be directly impacted by both the potential mining sites as well as the regional infrastructure requirements for the mine operations within the Ring of Fire”.





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Please note: Chief Sonny Gagnon, Chief Arthur Moore, & Chief Wabasse will be available for phone interviews only.

For further information please contact:

Amanda Bay- Communications Officer

T- (807) 767-4443 Ext#223

E- amanda@firedogpr.com

Chief Sonny Gagnon- Aroland First Nation

T- (807) 329-5970 (Band Office)

C- (807) 620-7195

Chief Arthur Moore- Constance Lake First Nation

T- (705) 463-4511 (Band Office)

Chief Cornelius Wabasse

T- (807) 353-5251 (Band Office)

