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Lake Nipigon First Nations and Matawa First Nations Leadership ready to tackle mining and infrastructure issues together

Thunder Bay, ON, February 4th, 2011- The Lake Nipigon First Nations and Matawa First Nations Chiefs are forming a united front when it comes to mining and infrastructure issues. The Chiefs met yesterday to initiate discussions on entering into a memorandum of understanding to work cooperatively together on common issues directly related to mineral development.

The Chiefs agreed to a framework on the issues the memorandum will undertake. Three key issues including the location of the proposed chromite processing plant, the transmission line from Nipigon to Little Jackfish and exploring economic and infrastructure opportunities, are going to form the initial content of the memorandum.

Chief Sonny Gagnon states; "The chromite will be taken from the traditional territories of the First Nations people; it only makes sense that we the First Nations people must have direct benefit from the construction and operation of the chromite processing facility. Matawa First Nations strongly stands behind the request that the processing facility be located in the Greenstone area".

The Chiefs in attendance at yesterday's meeting unanimously supported the creation of an alliance between the two Chiefs organizations. It was stressed by all Chiefs that First Nations must present a united front on the important issues facing the two organizations. Developments in the Ring of Fire will provide opportunities but also accompanying challenges for First Nations and as such, the First Nations from the two organizations must support each other.

Chief Pierre Pelletier states; "It's exciting that the Lake Nipigon Chiefs and the Matawa Chiefs are banding together to take on common issues such as the transmission line from Nipigon to Little Jackfish. We, as the Chiefs of Lake Nipigon wish to see this transmission line become a reality. It's encouraging to see that the Matawa Chiefs share this same position".

Understanding the importance and the urgency of the issues confronting the First Nations and the short time frames to develop strategies and action plans for these matters, the Chiefs have agreed to sign off on the memorandum of understanding on Friday, February 11, 2011.

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