



MATAWA FIRST NATIONS

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Matawa First Nations Chiefs Respond to Rosehart's Northwestern Ontario Economic Report

Thunder Bay, ON - The Matawa First Nations Chiefs are disappointed over the Rosehart Report, released this week. Despite expectations, the report neither addresses the major economic concerns facing First Nations today, nor promotes strategies to build new opportunity and partnerships for the North. According to Matawa First Nations, the implementation of the report will require increased effort and input if it seeks to bring First Nations and Aboriginal people into the economy of Northwestern Ontario.

Matawa First Nations agree that the two major oversights of the Rosehart Report are with respect to **Revenue Sharing** and **Duty to Consult**. Says Chief Scott Jacob: "There are so many opportunities that could arise from Resource Revenue Sharing agreements with First Nations. It is an embarrassment that these opportunities are not part of the provincial agenda to building economic strength for the people of Ontario."

Continued Chief Jacob; "As First Nations, we see Resource Sharing as a path to creating business and employment opportunities for our youth and in building more prosperous and self-





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sufficient First Nations. Resource Sharing is about sharing a percentage of the gross revenues generated by industry related resource extractions within our traditional lands. This resource revenue would be a direct investment into our communities and people, and ultimately save on Ontario social assistance costs in the long-term. As First Nations we do not want to be dependent on the government, we want to find economic solutions that will allow us to be self-sufficient and benefit all Ontario taxpayers – we want the people of Ontario to know that.”

In the second instance, the Rosehart Report also makes no recommendations for Ontario to upgrade its legislation to conform to what the provincial courts are advocating with respect to the duty to consult and accommodation with First Nations over resource development on traditional lands.

Says Chief Scott Jacob; “The gap between existing Ontario legislation and current law will continue to burden relationships building between industry, government and First Nations as well as undermine economic growth opportunities in the North. Continued uncertainty amongst resource developers and First Nations is damaging our Northern economies and the spirit of Ontarians. It’s about time we started to read about positive partnerships being developed across the North that are based on cooperation and mutual benefit for all people. Isn’t that the essence of our democratic society?”

The Matawa First Nations’ public response to the Rosehart Report is fuelled with frustrations amongst community leaders. “Our First Nations have been discussing these issues with Ontario for years,” says Chief Scott Jacob. “Although there are always exceptions, most industries see the





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rationale of ensuring positive working relationships in the North and our First Nations WANT to participate in the growth of Ontario’s economy. It saddens us as leaders that such enormous potential in Ontario is being overlooked by successive governments.”

Matawa First Nations are a Tribal Council of ten communities located in the Nishnawbe Aski Nation; Aroland, Constance Lake, Eabametoong, Ginoogaming, Hornepayne, Long Lake #58, Marten Falls, Neskantaga, Nibinamik, and Webequie First Nations.

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