



NEWS

Ministry of Northern Development and Mines

Ontario, First Nations to Work Together on Ring of Fire

Historic Agreement to Move Ring of Fire Development Forward

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March 26, 2014

The Province of Ontario and Matawa-member First Nations are taking another step forward by reaching a landmark agreement that will ensure First Nation communities benefit from the proposed Ring of Fire development.

The regional framework agreement is a first step in a historic, community-based negotiation process, which began in July 2013 at the request of Matawa-member First Nations.

The nine Matawa-member First Nations and the Province of Ontario signed a framework agreement today to move forward with a negotiation process on a community-based regional approach to development in the Ring of Fire.

The agreement ensures First Nations and Ontario can work together to advance Ring of Fire opportunities, including regional long-term environmental monitoring and enhanced participation in environmental assessment processes, resource revenue sharing, economic supports, regional and community infrastructure.

Michael Gravelle, Minister of Northern Development and Mines, signed the Regional Framework on behalf of Ontario. The chiefs signed on behalf of their communities, which included:

- Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nations
- Chief Fred Sackaney, Constance Lake First Nation
- Chief Elizabeth Atlookan, Eabametoong First Nation
- Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation
- Chief Elijah Moonias, Marten Falls First Nation
- Acting Chief, Roy Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation
- Chief Johnny Yellowhead, Nibinamik First Nation
- Chief Allen Towegishig, Long Lake #58 First Nation
- Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation

An official celebration will take place at a later date. Details to be announced.

Investing in the development of the Ring of Fire is part of Ontario's economic plan that is creating jobs for today and tomorrow. The comprehensive plan and its six priorities focus on Ontario's greatest strengths — its people and strategic partnerships.



Matawa Chiefs Council is comprised of the Matawa-Member First Nations Chiefs. The First Nations are located in northern Ontario. Five First Nations are remote and accessible only by air or winter road. Four of the First Nations are drive-in communities. All nine First Nations will be impacted by resource development in the area known as the Ring of Fire.

QUOTES

“This regional framework agreement is a landmark achievement in community and regional discussions. I am proud that our collaborative work with Matawa-member First Nations continues to progress. Together, we are moving forward on realizing the Ring of Fire’s potential and making important advancements on regional, environmental, and economic developments.”
 — Michael Gravelle, Minister of Northern Development and Mines

“Improving the quality of life and creating lasting economic benefits for First Nations communities is a priority for this government. This regional framework is a historic agreement that demonstrates how respectful dialogue, negotiation and collaboration can move economic development projects forward, creating benefits for everyone involved.”
 — David Zimmer, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs

“I’ve seen many framework type processes come and go, and MOUs, and some have had beneficial results but many have not gone anywhere. I am optimistic that this regional framework allows us to be more involved in development and the decision-making that is going to happen. I am assured the regional framework will enhance and not supersede our community-based MOU signed in September 2012. We are working to set the course to move our First Nations away from dependence so that we can capture the maximum benefits and move towards community wellness and increase ambition for our people.”
 — Chief Elijah K. Moonias, Marten Falls First Nation

“This is a special and significant event and we are looking forward to an official celebration. The negotiations under this framework will complement the essential direct negotiations Webequie is having with the Province of Ontario on a range of issues related to the Ring of Fire. Success in both of these negotiations will chart a course for a different future for all of us. It is now time for the real work to begin and we look forward to working with Ontario and our fellow First Nations.”
 — Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation

“This framework demonstrates that our First Nations are open for development that is sustainable and respects our lands.”
 — Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

“The regional framework is not about selling our land, but sharing our land as our Elders envisioned for the benefit of all. Nibinamik First Nation understands the importance of balance



between economic development that is required to ensure community growth and productivity and the need to sustain cultural values and beliefs particularly as related to the land.”
 — Chief Johnny Yellowhead, Nibinamik First Nation

“Eabametoong is a large First Nation and we have worked very hard to get here. Our community is hopeful about the future now that we can move forward on resource development discussions with the province.”
 — Chief Elizabeth Atlookan, Eabametoong First Nation

“Our community members, both on and off reserve, will be very engaged in this process. Our neighbours in Greenstone and the entire northern Ontario region should be pleased that we now have a process. This is a milestone for everyone in Ontario.”
 — Chief Allen Towegishig, Long Lake #58 First Nation

“I am so proud to stand with our nine chiefs and sign this regional framework today. My community members back home have been waiting a long time to have meaningful negotiations with Ontario. This is just the beginning.”
 — Chief Fred Sackaney, Constance Lake First Nation

“I’m signing on behalf of Neskantaga First Nation and Chief Peter Moonias, who has worked very hard to move the regional framework forward. We are all very excited about the progress and are looking forward to working together for our children’s future.”
 — Acting Chief Roy Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation

“I want to thank all my First Nation members. We have worked really hard at the community level to get where we are today. I look forward to working with our chiefs and with Ontario as we move forward.”
 — Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation

QUICK FACTS

- The Ring of Fire, located 540 kilometres northeast of Thunder Bay, is one of the most significant mineral regions in the province
- The Ring of Fire has mineral potential known to be worth \$60 billion and includes the largest deposit of chromite ever discovered in North America. Chromite is a key ingredient of stainless steel.
- The Ring of Fire also holds the potential for significant production of nickel, copper and platinum.
- In July 2013, [Ontario appointed the Honourable Frank Iacobucci](#) as the lead negotiator for Ontario to participate in discussions with the Matawa-member First Nations on proposed resource development in the Ring of Fire.
- In November 2013, Ontario announced that it would lead the [creation of a development corporation](#) to bring together private and public partners, including key mining companies,



First Nations, and the provincial and federal governments, to lead strategic infrastructure development for the Ring of Fire region.

- Development in the Ring of Fire is subject to all necessary environmental assessment and regulatory processes, and fulfillment of the Crown's duty to consult.

LEARN MORE

- Find out how the Ring of Fire is part of the [Growth Plan for Northern Ontario](#)
- [Read more about the Ring of Fire](#)

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