



Matawa
First Nations Management Inc.

2011-12 CHIEFS COUNCIL REPORT



**Prepared for the 24th
Annual General Meeting**
July 31 to August 2, 2012 //
Hosted by Webeque First Nation



AROLAND FIRST NATION



CONSTANCE LAKE
FIRST NATION



GINOOGAMING FIRST NATION



LONG LAKE #58 FIRST NATION



Neskantaga
First Nation



WEBEQUE FIRST NATION



Matawa
First Nations Management Inc.

VISION



Matawa First Nations will be prosperous and enriched First Nations both individually and collectively. By creating enhanced social and economic opportunities for everyone, the Matawa First Nations will reach their maximum potential and have confidence in the future.

MISSION



Matawa First Nations are committed to supporting each other and focusing our collective efforts on core strategic priorities. By working together as a regional community, we will use our combined knowledge and resources in order to champion the social and economic vitality of our First Nations and invest in community and people building.

VALUES



Matawa First Nations Work Together

We have the opportunities to grow and reach our maximum potential as a regional group. The diversity within our regional communities is valued and a source of local and regional pride. We are proactively involved in the economic, cultural and political development of the Matawa territory.

Matawa First Nations are Dynamic and Sustainable Communities

We integrate modern social and economic development practices with our traditional culture and heritage. We build capacity and economic wealth for present and future generations and are well positioned to succeed in the national economy.

Matawa First Nations Uphold Quality of Life

We invest and protect our quality of life – socially, economically, culturally and environmentally and ensure that the Matawa First Nations are prosperous and healthy communities in which to live, work and raise a family.



CHIEFS COUNCIL 2011-2012

Matawa Chiefs Council provides guidance and direction for the CEO and Board of Directors of Matawa First Nations Management Inc. The Chiefs Council also comes together to work on common issues that impact their communities.



AROLAND FIRST NATION
Chief Sonny Gagnon



GINOOGAMING FIRST NATION
Chief Celia Echum



NESKANTAGA FIRST NATION
Chief Peter Moonias



CONSTANCE LAKE FIRST NATION
Chief Roger Wesley



LONG LAKE #58 FIRST NATION
Chief Allen Towegishig
*Chief Veronica Waboose
(January 2010-2012)*



NIBINAMIK FIRST NATION
Chief Johnny Yellowhead
*Chief Roger Oskineegish
(November 2009-2011)*



EABAMETOONG FIRST NATION
Chief Harry Papah



MARTEN FALLS FIRST NATION
Chief Elijah K. Moonias



WEBEQUIE FIRST NATION
Chief Cornelius Wabasse

CHIEFS COUNCIL SUPPORT

DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTION

To provide technical, policy and political advice to First Nations Chiefs both collectively and individually, and support managers within Matawa First Nations Management.



PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

JULY 2011- JULY 2012

- ▶ Matawa Mining Strategy development with support in the areas of:
 - Training and Education – Proposals for KKETS
 - Prescription Drug Abuse - Proposals development
 - Environment – Four Rivers Training
 - Communications – Communication Worker Training
(Communications Department took over training of CCLOs on October 1, 2011)
 - Economic Development – Minawshyn Development Corporation
 - Leadership Meetings
- ▶ Forestry Initiative:
 - Forestry Technical Committee formed to oversee transition to SFL ownership



HIGHLIGHTS AND SUCCESSES

- ▶ Unity Declaration
- ▶ Gatherings in Neskantaga and Thunder Bay to build consensus on resource development
- ▶ Strong position on environmental process

CHALLENGES

- ▶ Building consensus on complex issues in an environment which does not support a co-ordinated approach
- ▶ Timely and appropriate information at the community level
- ▶ Capacity challenges at the First Nations level where there are limited human and financial resources

OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ Potential to develop a regional structure which could address issues of:
 - Regional infrastructure
 - Social, community and economic development supports
 - Resources Revenue Sharing

CHIEFS COUNCIL VISION & MISSION

VISION:

We will do whatever is necessary in order to protect our land, our water and our resources for the future generations. We agree that we must stand together in order to ensure our nation is protected. Therefore, we assert our Aboriginal and Treaty rights to the land, water and resources by requiring written consent before any development activity may proceed. Failure to consult, accommodate and receive the consent of the First Nation(s) to proceed with any work or activity is an unjustified infringement upon our Aboriginal, Treaty and Custodial rights as First Nations. *(see Unity Declaration – page 31)*

MISSION:

1. Protection of our land, our water and our resources.
2. Protection of our Rights as Peoples of the Land. We have Inherent, Aboriginal Title, Custodial and Treaty Rights.
3. We respect and trust the autonomy of each First Nation, respecting each other's priorities and paths to reach our common goals.
4. We want to maximize opportunities for our Peoples in any development that they consent to, such as resource revenue and economic benefits.
5. We will achieve our goals through control and ownership of any development and activities in our territories.

ISSUES:

1. Resource Revenue Benefits: We recognized that First Nations who are in the immediate development area have a right to negotiate benefit agreements on resources in their territory, and other area First Nations may have indirect benefits.
2. Economic and Employment Benefits: We recognize that all our Peoples of the nine Matawa communities can be involved in any economic and employment opportunities on any development in our territories.
3. Impacts of Development: We recognize that we will have similar environment and socio-economic impacts on development happening in our territories. We respect and trust that each First Nation will have different paths to follow according to their traditions and protocols. We respect and trust that we will share our knowledge, our experience and our values with each other to build a stronger Nation.

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CHIEFS MEETINGS 2011-2012

MEETINGS IN 2011: August 11, 2011 – Matawa Chiefs Meeting

September 27, 2011 – Signing of Matawa/Mushkegowuk Joint Declaration in Moose Factory

October 20 - 21, 2011 – Chiefs Meeting with Ontario, Canada and Companies

October 2 - 3, 2011 – Chiefs Lobbying in Ottawa

November 5 - 8, 2011 – Canadian Aboriginal Mineral Conference in Vancouver

November 16 - 18, 2011 – Matawa Chiefs Meeting in Thunder Bay

December 15 - 16, 2011 – Matawa Chiefs Meeting in Thunder Bay

MEETINGS IN 2012: January 12 - 13, 2012 – Matawa Chiefs Meeting

January 24 - 26, 2012 – Prescription Drug Abuse/Misuse Summit in Long Lake #58 First Nation

February 1 - 2, 2012 – Matawa Chiefs Meeting / NAN Energy Conference

February 28, 2012 – Chiefs in Ottawa for Lobbying

March 3 - 6, 2012 – Prospectors and Developments Conference (PADC) in Toronto

March 6, 2012 – Breakfast with the Minister of Northern Development and Mines in Toronto

March 20 - 23, 2012 – Matawa Gathering of Communities in Thunder Bay

March 30 - April 1, 2012 – Matawa Chiefs Meeting and Follow-up Meeting with Cliffs CEO

April 24 - 25, 2012 – Matawa Chiefs Meeting

May 15 - 17, 2012 – NAN Chiefs Spring Meeting

June 18 - 20, 2012 – Matawa Chiefs Meeting



RESOLUTIONS 2011-2012



RESOLUTIONS IN 2011:	Resolution 01	11/08/11	Matawa First Nations Supports Aroland, Ginoogaming and Long Lake #58 First Nations' Initiatives Relating to Premier Gold Mines Limited, Hardrock Project
	Resolution 02	11/08/11	Board Members for KKETS
	Resolution 03	11/08/11	Sioux Lookout First Nations Chiefs Committee on Health Appointment
	Resolution 04	16/11/11	Transmission Infrastructure Development in the Matawa Region
	Resolution 05	16/11/11	Economic Development Strategy – Chiefs Council Support
	Resolution 06	16/11/11	Ferrochrome Production and Refining Facility in the Matawa Region
	Resolution 07	17/11/11	Environmental Assessment Strategy
	Resolution 08	17/11/11	External Advisory Panel
RESOLUTIONS IN 2012:	Resolution 01	23/03/12	Methadone Reduction
	Resolution 02	23/03/12	Matawa Health Integration Services Fund (HSIF) Proposal
	Resolution 03	25/04/12	Matawa Education Chiefs Representation
	Resolution 04	25/04/12	Wequedong Lodge Board Representation
	Resolution 05	25/04/12	Prevention of Racism in the Mineral Exploration and Mining Sector
	Resolution 06	20/06/12	Tikinagan Child and Family Services Board of Director Appointment
	Resolution 07	20/06/12	Support for Neskantaga First Nation as a Party to Corridor Dispute
	Resolution 08	20/06/12	Ring of Fire Moratorium Resolution
	Resolution 09	03/02/12	Kenogami Forest License (2012)



CHIEFS COUNCIL

Resolution 01-11/08/11

Matawa First Nations Support for Aroland, Ginoogaming and Long Lake #58 First Nations' Initiatives Relating to Premier Gold Mines Limited's Hardrock Project

Whereas, the Matawa First Nations Chiefs have signed the Mamow-Wecheekapawetahteewiin (Unity Declaration) to move forward on a unified approach with respect to development in their traditional territories, stating that these respective lands are under their control and consent to operate in their respective territories cannot be given by Government or any other entities; and,

Whereas, such consent will be granted through the required steps as defined in each First Nations' respective Consultation and Accommodation Protocol; and,

Whereas, a collective Consultation and Accommodation Protocol is required to be negotiated between the Matawa First Nations, the Province and Canada to address mineral exploration and development activities within the homelands of all Matawa First Nations; and,

Whereas, Premier Gold Mines Limited has proposed an Advanced Exploration Project at the Hardrock Project site (former Macleod-Mosher Mine) that will include dewatering a former mine shaft and advancing a ramp to access the mine shaft; and,

Whereas, the activities of Premier Gold Mines Limited at the Hard rock Project site occur in and have the potential to directly impact the interests within the traditional territories of Aroland First Nation, Ginoogaming First Nation and Long Lake #58 First Nation; and,

Whereas, Premier Gold Mines Limited has initiated the permit application process for the Hardrock Project prior to satisfactory agreements and/or studies being in place with the three most-affected Matawa First Nations communities; and,

Whereas, the activities at the Hardrock Project site have the potential to impact the First Nations members of these communities to utilize their traditional lands for hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering and other activities that are beneficial to the respective First Nation;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Matawa First Nations Chiefs stand unified in supporting the efforts of Aroland First Nation, Ginoogaming First Nation and Long Lake #58 First Nation to generate satisfactory agreements between themselves and Premier Gold Mines Limited and/or to conduct cultural impact assessments on the Hard rock Project, as required by each individual First Nation; and,

Therefore Be It Resolved that these agreements and/or studies are required to be completed, to the satisfaction of each individual First Nation, prior to providing their consent for any of Premier Gold Mines Limited's proposed Advanced Exploration Activities.



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CHIEFS COUNCIL

Moved by: Chief Roger Wesley, Constance Lake First Nation

Seconded by: Chief Roger Oksineegish, Nibinamik First Nation

Carried: Motion carried (9).

Dated in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the 11th day of August, 2011.

Chiefs Present:

Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Chief Roger Wesley, Constance Lake First Nation

Chief Harry Papah, Eabametoong First Nation

Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation

Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation

Chief Roger Oksineegish, Nibinamik First Nation

Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation

Proxy, Councillor Ervin Waboose, Long Lake# 58 First Nation

Proxy Councillor Grace Bottle, Marten Falls First Nation



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CHIEFS COUNCIL

Resolution 02-11/08/11

Board Members of KKETS

Whereas the Matawa First Nations Chiefs have authorized the creation of Kiikenomaga Kikenjigenwen (KKETS) as an independent entity to support community training needs, such as literacy, upgrading, preemployment training, apprenticeships and other education / training programs; and

Whereas KKETS will require three members for its Board of Directors to finalize the incorporation process;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Matawa First Nations Chiefs Council hereby approves Conrad Chapais, Ginoogaming First Nation; Elsie MacDonald, Webequie First Nation and Annie Oskineegish, Nibinamik First Nation, for the Board of Directors of KKETS incorporation which should then be reflected in the "Letters Patent" and "By-Law No.1".

Moved by: Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation

Seconded by: Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Carried: Motion carried (9).

Dated in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the 11th day of August, 2011.

Chiefs Present:

Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation
 Chief Roger Wesley, Constance Lake First Nation
 Chief Harry Papah, Eabametoong First Nation
 Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation
 Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation
 Chief Roger Oskineegish, Nibinamik First Nation
 Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation
 Proxy, Councillor Ervin Waboose, Long Lake# 58 First Nation
 Proxy Councillor Grace Bottle, Marten Falls First Nation



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CHIEFS COUNCIL

Resolution 03-11/08/11

Sioux Lookout First Nations Chiefs Committee On Health Appointment

Whereas the Sioux Lookout First Nations Chiefs Committee on Health has requested a Chief from the Matawa Region which is serviced by the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority;

Therefore Be It resolved that the Matawa First Nations Chiefs Council hereby appoints Chief Harry Papah, Eabametoong First Nation as the Matawa First Nations representative on the Sioux Lookout First Nations Chiefs Committee on Health.

Moved by: Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation

Seconded by: Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Carried: Motion carried (9).

Dated in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the 11th day of August, 2011.

Chiefs Present:

Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Chief Roger Wesley, Constance Lake First Nation

Chief Harry Papah, Eabametoong First Nation

Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation

Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation

Chief Roger Oskineegish, Nibinamik First Nation

Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation

Proxy, Councillor Ervin Waboose, Long Lake# 58 First Nation

Proxy Councillor Grace Bottle, Marten Falls First Nation



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CHIEFS COUNCIL

Resolution 04-16/11/11

Transmission Infrastructure Development in the Matawa Region

Whereas the Matawa First Nations have called for a negotiated Joint Review Panel Environmental Assessment to provide due diligence on the environmental impacts of mineral development and its infrastructure in the Matawa region, and

Whereas the Matawa First Nations Chiefs support infrastructure development upon completion of all due diligence in the environment and which supports the free, prior and informed consent of First Nations people; and

Whereas infrastructure development in the Matawa region must support the economic, social, cultural and infrastructure needs of First Nations at the community level; and

Whereas transmission infrastructure will cross several First Nations traditional territory to reach the proposed smelter in the Matawa regional, and;

Whereas First Nations want to be owners of this infrastructure; and

Whereas the transmission infrastructure for the proposed ferrochrome production and refining facility will cross other First Nations traditional territory;

Therefore Be It Resolve that Matawa First Nations Chiefs support the development of a memorandum of understanding with the Lake Nipigon First Nations to explore discussion on a joint transmission proposal; and

Be It Further Resolved that the Matawa First Nations Chiefs challenge Canada, Ontario and Industry for a negotiating process to enable this to happen.

Moved by: Veronica Waboose, Long Lake# 58 First Nation

Seconded by: Chief Harry Papah, Eabametoong First Nation

Carried (8)

Dated in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the 16th day of November, 2011.

Chiefs Present:

Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation

Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Chief Roger Wesley, Constance Lake First Nation

Chief Roger Oskineegish, Nibinamik First Nation

Chief Veronica Waboose, Long Lake# 58 First Nation

Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation

Chief Harry Papah, Eabametoong First Nation

Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation



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CHIEFS COUNCIL

Resolution 05-16/11/11

Economic Development Strategy-Chiefs Council Support

Whereas, On July 13, 2011 The Matawa First Nations Chiefs Council unanimously endorsed a Resolution for moving forward with, and securing funding for, an Economic Development Strategy that compliments local economic development strategies with respect to opportunities presented by the Ring of Fire developments and is:

- informed by the values of our communities and their goals and objectives;
- based on a shared vision built from community consultations with a full range of community members in each community, including community leaders, youth and elders;
- includes a preliminary analysis of the full range of economic and community development opportunities, including potential ownership, management and operational positions for known and potential mining and supporting infrastructure projects in the "Ring of Fire" and other areas, and;
- contains preliminary investment objectives for Ring of Fire and other areas requirements for transportation, transmission, telecommunication, electric ARC furnace, energy generation, water treatment, environmental services, accommodation, catering services, and logistics; and

Whereas, The July 13, 2011 Resolution made it clear that the Matawa First Nations strategic economic development plan will include consultation with Chief and Council, elders and community leaders in each Matawa community, and will "roll-up" recommendations from each community into an achievable strategic vision at both regional and community levels; and

Whereas, The July 13, 2011 Resolution made it clear that the Matawa First Nations have *both* the individual and the collective desire to pursue economic opportunities associated with mining and enabling infrastructure development in their traditional territories and will identify their individual *and* collective priorities regarding the economic development opportunities they want to pursue; and

Whereas, The Matawa First Nations have access to existing economic development corporation vehicles to drive forward with infrastructure business initiatives, and will no doubt create many future regional, sub-regional and local community corporations in the course of time; and

Whereas, The Regional Economic Development Strategy will help each Matawa First Nation clarify choices and opportunities for determining the most beneficial infrastructure business initiatives to pursue; and



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Whereas, The Matawa First Nations are facing tremendous economic development pressure posed by Ring of Fire mining developments and do not have the resources to plan ahead and identify positive economic development goals for our communities across the vast Matawa First Nations territories; and

Whereas, the Matawa First Nations will become informed on the full range of economic opportunities and their associated risks, costs and benefits to effectively pursue their priority opportunities- collectively, individually and in smaller groups of First Nations; and

Whereas, the Matawa First Nations will understand the various approaches available to pursue these economic opportunities to benefit individual communities and all Matawa First Nations; and

Whereas, the Matawa First Nations will have the awareness and tools to harness change individually and collectively, while protecting the traditional values; so

Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Matawa First Nations Chiefs direct the Ring of Fire Coordinator to inform FedNor that the Matawa Chiefs fully support the Regional Economic Development Strategy proposal submitted to FedNor by Matawa First Nations dated October 7, 2011; and

Further Be It Resolved that the Matawa First Nations Chiefs direct the Ring of Fire Co-ordinator to inform FedNor that the Matawa Chiefs wish to begin work on the Regional Economic Development Strategy immediately, and

Be It Finally Resolved that nothing in this proposal shall negatively impact community based proposals which are equally important.

Moved by: Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation
Seconded by: Chief Harry Papah, Eabametoong First Nation
Carried (8):

Chiefs Present:

Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation
Chief Roger Oskineegish, Nibinamik First Nation
Chief Veronica Waboose, Long Lake# 58 First Nation
Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation
Chief Harry Papah, Eabametoong First Nation
Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation
Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation
Councillor Darius Ferris, Constance Lake First Nation

Dated in Thunder Bay, Ontario at the Matawa Chiefs Meeting on the 16th day of November, 2011.



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CHIEFS COUNCIL

Resolution 06-16/11/11

Ferrochrome Production and Refining Facility in the Matawa Region

Whereas the Matawa First Nations have called for a negotiated Joint Review Panel Environmental Assessment to provide due diligence on the environmental impacts of mineral development in the Matawa region, and

Whereas the Matawa First Nations Chiefs support mineral development upon completion of all due diligence in the environment and which supports the free, prior and informed consent of First Nations people; and

Whereas mineral development in the Matawa region should support the socio-economic /cultural economy of First Nations in that region throughout the mining cycle, including extraction and processing; and

Whereas there is the need to build a ferrochrome production and refining facility in the Matawa region;

Therefore Be It Resolve that Matawa First Nations Chiefs support in principle the development of a ferrochrome production and refining facility in the Matawa region, along with accompanying infrastructure; and

Be It Further resolved that the Matawa First Nations Chiefs challenge Canada, Ontario and Industry for a negotiating process to enable this to happen.

Moved by: Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation

Seconded by: Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation

Carried (9)

Dated in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the 16th day of November, 2011.

Chiefs Present:

Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation

Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Chief Roger Wesley, Constance Lake First Nation

Chief Roger Oskineegish, Nibinamik First Nation

Chief Veronica Waboose, Long Lake# 58 First Nation

Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation Chief

Harry Papah, Eabametoong First Nation

Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation



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CHIEFS COUNCIL

Resolution 07-17/11/11

Environmental Assessment Strategy

Whereas the Matawa First Nations Chiefs support mineral development upon completion of all due diligence in the environment and which supports the free, prior and informed consent of First Nations people; and

Whereas, the Matawa First Nations have called for a negotiated Joint Review Panel Environmental Assessment to provide due diligence on the environmental impacts of mineral development and accompanying infrastructure in the Matawa region, and

Whereas the government of Canada, through Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA), is only willing to support a comprehensive Environmental Assessment, which fast tracks the development in a mostly paper based process and does not provide for extensive community consultations; and

Whereas the Matawa First Nations have launched a judicial review to challenge the decision of CEAA, and the first proponent - Cliffs Natural Resources; and

Whereas this legal action is part of wider strategy to achieve a negotiated Joint Review Panel;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Matawa Chiefs support a three track approach of Media and Lobbying, Legal Actions, and Negotiations; and

Be It Further Resolved Noront Resources be added to the Judicial Review as CEAA has now approved them for a comprehensive review; and

Be It Finally Resolved that a conflict of interest/disclosure policy and case management process be developed for communications between individual First Nation's legal counsels.

Moved by: Chief Veronica Waboose, Long Lake# 58 First Nation

Seconded by: Chief Roger Wesley, Constance Lake First Nation

Abstentions: Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation

Carried: (7)

Dated in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the 17th day of November, 2011.

Chiefs Present:

Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation

Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Chief Roger Wesley, Constance Lake First Nation

Chief Roger Oskineegish, Nibinamik First Nation

Chief Veronica Waboose, Long Lake# 58 First Nation

Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation

Chief Harry Papah, Eabametoong First Nation

Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation



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CHIEFS COUNCIL

Resolution 08-17/11/11

External Advisory Panel

Whereas with the future economic development opportunities across the Matawa region, First Nations will need more technical expertise to meet those needs, and

Whereas each First Nations, along with Matawa First Nations, will be hiring consultants, lobbyists, lawyers, researchers, etc., to support them, and

Whereas each First Nation is autonomous and has their own system of decision making; and

Whereas there is a need to collectively work together and support community based solutions; and

Whereas there is a need to bring this knowledge, together with lessons learned, transparency, collective support and to reduce competition between communities and / or Matawa for limited resources;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Matawa First Nations direct an External Advisory Table to be formed to promote communications and co-ordination between First Nations; and

Be It Further Resolved that a Terms of Reference Be Developed and approved by the Matawa First Nations Chiefs which will include, but not limited to consultants/lawyers/researchers/lobbyists and Matawa;and

Be It Further Resolved that the Terms of Reference address the following issues:

- Disclosure:
- Conflict of Interest:
- Communications:
- Co-operations
- Confidentiality
- Code of Ethics
- Expectations

Moved by: Chief Roger Okineegish, Nibinamik First Nation

Seconded by: Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation

Carried (8) Dated in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the 17th day of November, 2011.

Chiefs Present:

Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation

Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Chief Roger Wesley, Constance Lake First Nation

Chief Roger Oskineegish, Nibinamik First Nation

Chief Veronica Waboose, Long Lake# 58 First Nation

Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation

Chief Harry Papah, Eabametoong First Nation

Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation



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CHIEFS COUNCIL

RESOLUTION 01– 23/03/12

Methadone Reduction

Whereas the Matawa First Nations Chiefs have repeatedly called for action on the prescription drug abuse / misuse crisis affecting their First Nations, most recently at the Back to Our Roots Gathering II in Long Lake # 58 First Nation on January 24 -26, 2012; and

Whereas Matawa Health and Social Task Group has developed a comprehensive strategy called Chi KeeWay Meno Biimadeseyung – The Strategy to Overcome Prescription Drug Abuse/Misuse in Matawa Communities, which includes methadone use; and

Whereas the methadone use is often accompanied by little or no aftercare and reduction strategy; and

Whereas the Health Canada Health, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and Ontario Works do not provide adequate funding for methadone aftercare and reduction strategy or methadone alternatives for those who want to get of prescription drugs;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Matawa First Nations Chiefs call for a methadone reduction component as part of the Matawa Prescription Drug Abuse / Misuse Strategy, which would include aftercare, tapering off methadone and / or alternative treatments; and

Be It Further Resolved that Health Canada and Ontario partner with Matawa First Nations to fully support Chi Kee Way Meno Biimadeseyung – The Strategy to Overcome Prescription Drug Abuse/Misuse in Matawa Communities at the funding, program, policy and political levels, including Methadone Reduction.

Moved by: Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Seconded by: Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation

Carried (6)

Dated in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the 23th day of March, 2012.

Chiefs Present:

Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation

Chief Allan Towegishig, Long Lake # 58 First Nation

Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Proxy Councillor Darius Ferris, Constance Lake First Nation

Proxy Councillor Anny Oskineegish, Nibinamik First Nation

Proxy Councilors Charlie Okeese / Tony Moonias, Eabametoong First Nation



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CHIEFS COUNCIL

RESOLUTION 02 – 23/03/12

Matawa Health Integration Services Fund (HSIF) Proposal

Whereas the Matawa First Nations Chiefs have repeatedly called for action on the prescription drug abuse / misuse crisis affecting their First Nations, most recently at the Back to Our Roots Gathering II in Long Lake #58 First Nation on January 24 -26, 2012; and

Whereas Matawa Health and Social Task Group has developed a comprehensive strategy called Chi KeeWay Meno Biimadeseyung – The Strategy to Overcome Prescription Drug Abuse/Misuse in Matawa Communities; and

Whereas the Strategy is broken out into community and regional initiatives that will require a number of funders and partners; and

Whereas the Health Canada Health Services Integration Fund (HSIF) is one program which would support this strategy;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Matawa First Nations Chiefs support the Health Services Integration Fund proposal developed by the Matawa Health and Social Services Task Group; and

Be It Further Resolved that Health Canada partner with Matawa First Nations to fully support Chi Kee Way Meno Biimadeseyung – The Strategy to Overcome Prescription Drug Abuse/Misuse in Matawa Communities at the funding, program, policy and political levels.

Moved by: Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation

Seconded by: Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Carried (6)

Dated in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the 23th day of March, 2012.

Chiefs Present:

Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation

Chief Allan Towegishig, Long Lake # 58 First Nation

Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Proxy Councillor Darius Ferris, Constance Lake First Nation

Proxy Councillor Anny Oskineegish, Nibinamik First Nation

Proxy Councilors Charlie Okeese / Tony Moonias, Eabametoong First Nation



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CHIEFS COUNCIL

RESOLUTION 03 - 25/04/12

Matawa Education Chiefs Representation

Whereas the Matawa Education Committee has requested a spokesperson for Education,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Matawa First Nations Chiefs Council appoint Chris Moonias, Neskantaga, as their representative on the Matawa Education Committee.

Moved by: Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Seconded by: Councillor Proxy, Grace Bottle, Marten Falls First Nation

Carried (9)

Dated in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the 25th day of April, 2012.

Chiefs Present:

Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation

Chief Allan Towegishig, Long Lake # 58 First Nation

Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation

Chief Roger Wesley, Constance Lake First Nation

Proxy Councillor Jerry Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation

Proxy Councillor Stanley Oskineegish, Nibinamik First Nation

Proxy Councilor Charlie Okeese, Eabametoong First Nation

Proxy Councilor Grace Bottle, Marten Falls First Nation



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CHIEFS COUNCIL

RESOLUTION 04 - 25/04/12

Weguedong Lodge Board Representation

Whereas a high portion of Matawa First Nation members use Weguedong Lodge in Thunder Bay for Accommodations during medical appointments;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Matawa First Nations Chiefs Council appoint Wayne Moonias, Neskantaga, as their representative on the Weguedong Lodge Board of Directors.

Moved by: Chief Allan Towegishig, Long Lake# 58 First Nation

Seconded by: Chief Roger Wesley, Constance Lake First Nation

Carried {9}

Dated in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the 25th day of April, 2012.

Chiefs Present:

Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation
 Chief Allan Towegishig, Long Lake# 58 First Nation
 Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation
 Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation
 Chief Roger Wesley, Constance Lake First Nation
 Proxy Councillor Jerry Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation
 Proxy Councillor Stanley Oskineegish, Nibinamik First Nation
 Proxy Councilor Charlie Okeese, Eabametoong First Nation
 Proxy Councilor Grace Bottle, Marten Falls First Nation



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CHIEFS COUNCIL

RESOLUTION 05-25/04/12

Prevention of Racism in the Mineral Exploration and Mining Sector

Whereas the mineral exploration activities are starting to happen in the traditional territories of the Matawa First Nations; and

Whereas the Matawa First Nations Chiefs are encouraging companies to hire and contract with First Nations members and First Nation Companies;

Therefore Be It Resolved that all companies operating in the Mineral Sector in the traditional territories of Matawa First Nations have anti-discrimination policies, including hiring, training, retention and promotion of First Nation staff; and creating a racism-free worksite for all employees as per Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and by the Ontario Labour Code and

Further Be It Resolved that companies operating in the Mineral Sector in the traditional territories of Matawa First Nations work with Matawa First Nation communities to develop these policies and practices.

Moved by: Chief Allan Towegishig, Long Lake # 58 First Nation

Seconded by: Chief Roger Wesley, Constance Lake First Nation

Carried (9)

Dated in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the 25th day of April, 2012.

Chiefs Present:

Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation

Chief Allan Towegishig, Long Lake # 58 First Nation

Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation

Chief Roger Wesley, Constance Lake First Nation

Proxy Councillor Gerry Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation

Proxy Councillor Stanley Oskineegish, Nibinamik First Nation

Proxy Councilor Charlie Okeese, Eabametoong First Nation

Proxy Councilor Grace Bottle, Marten Falls First Nation



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CHIEFS COUNCIL

RESOLUTION 06 – 20/06/12

Tikinagan Child and Family Services Board of Director Appointment

Whereas several Matawa First Nation Communities are represented on the Board of Directors of Tikinagan Child and Family Services by a Director;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Matawa First Nations Chiefs Council appoints Chief Sonny Gagnon to the Board of Directors of Tikinagan Child and Family Services.

Moved by: Chief Roger Wesley, Constance Lake First Nation

Seconded by: Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation

Carried (6)

Dated in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the 20th day of June, 2012.

Chiefs Present:

Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation

Chief Allan Towegishig, Long Lake # 58 First Nation

Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Chief Roger Wesley, Constance Lake First Nation

Chief Johnny Yellowhead, Nibinamik First Nation

Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation



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CHIEFS COUNCIL

RESOLUTION 07– 20/06/12

Support for Neskantaga First Nation as Party to Corridor Dispute

Whereas Neskantaga First Nation has traditional territory along the Attawapiskat River and has constitutionally protected Treaty and Aboriginal Rights; and

Whereas the Cliffs Cromite Project is planning a 340 km all weather access road through their traditional territory along the Attawapiskat River; and

Whereas Cliffs Cromite Project is in dispute with Canada Chome Corporation - who has staked much of this area - and the Ministry of Natural Resources on accessing this area; and

Whereas neither company nor Ontario has consulted or accommodated with Neskantaga First Nation;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Matawa First Nations support Neskantaga First Nation as being a party to this hearing before the Ontario Mining and Land Commissioner (File No. MA 005-12) so they can be consulted and accommodated on their traditional territory.

Moved by: Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation

Seconded by: Chief Roger Wesley, Constance Lake First Nation

Carried (6)

Dated in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the 20th day of June, 2012.

Chiefs Present:

Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation

Chief Allan Towegishig, Long Lake # 58 First Nation

Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Chief Roger Wesley, Constance Lake First Nation

Chief Johnny Yellowhead, Nibinamik First Nation

Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation



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CHIEFS COUNCIL

RESOLUTION 08 – 20/06/2012

Ring of Fire Moratorium Resolution

Whereas, on May 9, 2012, Cliffs Natural Resources, an American transnational mining Company, announced that they had reached an agreement in principle with Ontario to develop a \$3.2 Billion mine and refinery in the so-called Ring of Fire.

Whereas, First Nations, whose unsundered lands and resources are fuelling the development of the Ring of Fire, were not part of the agreement in principle and only learned of the agreement at the 11th hour.

Whereas, the whole Ring of Fire development began back in 2002 when the mining companies staked 30, 000 mining claims on Treaty No. 9 lands without any notice, consultation or accommodation and without our free, prior and informed consent.

Whereas, the mining companies have spent more than \$100 million exploring these claims up until 2010 and these expenditures have delivered very little or nothing in the way of benefits to our communities.

Whereas, in 2010, Cliffs Natural Resources bought the junior mining companies Freewest and Spider for \$350 million and our communities received no benefit from the sale of lands which the First Nations have never surrendered.

Whereas, Ontario and Canada stand to make hundreds of millions in revenues on the projected \$1.4 Billion in annual gross revenues the Cliffs mine will generate over the next 30 or more years.

Whereas, our communities are in crisis with inadequate housing, failing water and sewage treatment plants, poor health care, substandard schools, a prescription drug crisis, rising incarceration rates and a ticking demographic time bomb of under and unemployed youth.

Whereas, Cliffs is proposing to construct a permanent road will open up the whole region and bring more mines and development and untold environmental and social effects to our lands, waters and communities.



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Whereas, the huge open pit and other proposed mines will change the way the water flows in the Attawapiskat watershed.

Whereas, the new mines will potentially release toxic acid mine drainage and cancer causing chemicals like Chromium6, mercury and other heavy metals.

Whereas, once there is a permanent access road into the far north our way of life will be changed forever and we will not be able to turn back the clock.

Whereas, the affected First Nations made a reasonable demand for a joint panel review environmental assessment and that demand was ignored and we were forced to file a judicial review to challenge the federal decision to review the projects in a paper exercise known as a comprehensive study.

Whereas, governments and the mining companies are not listening to us and are running roughshod over our aboriginal and treaty rights and ignoring Treaty No. 9.

Whereas, Ontario and Canada are breaking the law and ignoring section 35 of the Constitution.

Therefore be it Resolved that the Unity Declaration signed by the Matawa Leadership, under the direction of their community membership, to protect the inherent right of self-determination is an Aboriginal and Treaty right recognized and affirmed under Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. The nine (9) First Nations take the position that our traditional territories are under our control, and approval to operate in our respective territories cannot be given by the Government or any other entities. We are united in sharing a common vision of being self-sufficient, self-governing peoples within a healthy, thriving culture, living in our homelands that shall sustain us for all times.

Further Therefore be it Resolved that the time for talk is over and it is now time to put a pause on the Ring of Fire development and fight for our jurisdiction, our land and the future of our children and their children's children.

Furthermore be it Resolved that the Ring of Fire project will only proceed after our communities have participated in a full and thorough environmental review of all the proposed mines, refinery, roads and infrastructure and after fully informing themselves and having negotiated appropriate terms and conditions that will protect the land, waters and sustainability of our way of life then freely consent to the project.



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Finally be it Resolved that a moratorium be immediately placed on all mining exploration and development, government permits, infrastructure projects, transportation corridors, transmission lines, baseline studies, archaeological screening and any and all other land based activities in the Ring of Fire unless, and until, Ontario and Canada come to a government to government table with a mandate to negotiate fundamental questions of First Nations jurisdiction, a trilateral environmental assessment process and real resource benefits and revenue sharing for our First Nations.

Moved by: Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Seconded by: Chief Allan Towegishig, Long Lake # 58 First Nation

Carried (6):

Chiefs Present:

Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation

Chief Allan Towegishig, Long Lake # 58 First Nation

Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Chief Roger Wesley, Constance Lake First Nation

Chief Johnny Yellowhead, Nibinamik First Nation

Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation

Dated in Thunder Bay, Ontario at the Matawa Chiefs Meeting on the 20th of June 2012.



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CHIEFS COUNCIL

RESOLUTION 09 - 03/02/12

Kenogami Forest License (2012)

Whereas Terrace Bay Pulp Inc. has commenced court-supervised restructuring under the Company's Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA); and

Whereas Terrace Bay Pulp Inc. holds the license for the Kenogami Sustainable Forest License (SFL), which covers the traditional territory of several Matawa First Nations; and

Whereas the Ontario Government through their tenure reform policy is seeking:

- new management models which are independent of the mills
- no harding policies
- encouraging new entrants
- First Nations involvement,
- local involvement, and
- a more market based system;

Therefore Be It Resolve that Matawa First Nations Chiefs support attached proposal to develop a new management system for the Kenogami SFL, a new governance structure the license, further applications to the forest futures fund; and

Be It Further Resolved that these discussion on the Kenogami forest includes amalgamation of the Ogoki Forest, management structures, marketing, Letters of Intent, Licensing models and outreach to other stakeholders.

Moved by: Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Seconded by: Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation

Carried (8)

Dated in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the 3rd day of February, 2012.

Chiefs Present:

Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation

Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation

Chief Roger Wesley, Constance Lake First Nation

Chief Johnny Yellowhead, Nibinamik First Nation

Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation

Chief Harry Papah, Eabametoong First Nation

Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation

Chief Allan Towegishig, Long Lake # 58 First Nation



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CHIEFS COUNCIL

Mamow- Wecheekapawetahteewiin

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UNITY DECLARATION

We, the undersigned nine (9) First Nations; Aroland, Constance Lake, Eabametoong, Ginoogaming, Marten Falls, Long Lake #58, Neskantaga, Nibinamik and Webequie, live and rely upon the lands, water and resources entrusted to us by the Creator. We are connected through our language, culture, social and economic interests. The First Nations have the inherent right of self-determination as determined by our First Nations and applies to our homelands. This fundamental right has always rested with our people. The inherent right of self-determination is an Aboriginal and Treaty right recognized and affirmed under **Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982**. The nine (9) First Nations take the position that our traditional territories are under our control, and approval to operate in our respective territories cannot be given by the Government or any other entities. We are united in sharing a common vision of being self-sufficient, self-governing peoples within a healthy, thriving culture, living in our homelands that shall sustain us for all times.

We will do whatever is necessary in order to protect our land, our water and our resources for the future generations. We agree that we must stand together in order to ensure our nation is protected. Therefore, we assert our Aboriginal and Treaty rights to the land, water and resources by requiring our written consent before any development activity may proceed. Failure to consult, accommodate and receive the consent of the First Nation(s) to proceed with any work or activity is an unjustified infringement upon our Aboriginal, Treaty and Custodial rights as First Nations.

Dated in Webequie First Nation at the Matawa Chiefs Meeting on the 13th day of July 2011.

X

Chief Collin Echum
Ginoogaming First Nation

X

Chief Sonny Wagner
Aroland First Nation

X

Chief Elijah Moonias
Marten Falls First Nation

X

Chief Peter Moonias
Neskantaga First Nation

X

Chief Roger Oskinegish
Nibinamik First Nation

X

Chief Harry Papah
Eabametoong First Nation

X

Chief Cornelius Wabasse
Webequie First Nation

X

Chief Roger Wesley
Constance Lake First Nation

X

Chief Veronica Waboose
Long Lake #58 First Nation



**JOINT DECLARATION
OF THE
MUSHKEGOWUK FIRST NATIONS
AND
MATAWA FIRST NATIONS**



*We, the undersigned
Chiefs of the Mushkegowuk First Nations
and*

*Matawa First Nations,
by recognition of the familial relationships between our
communities which share a respect for the Creator, common
history, treaty understandings and use of the rivers and land,
Hereby declare that:*

*We are fully committed to the implementation of the
Oral Treaty made between our Peoples and the
Government of Canada and Ontario;*

*We are committed to exercising our inherent and treaty
rights, without limitations imposed by others;*

*We will consider the use of any options to ensure that the
development of our homelands occur only with the free,
informed and prior consent of our First Nations; and*

*We will continue to work together through the sharing of
information and strategies to ensure that the above
commitments are fulfilled.*

**By signing below the following Matawa and Mushkegowuk First Nations
commit to this Declaration, dated September 27, 2011
Omushkego Mamohitowin - Moose Cree First Nation.**

CHIEFS OF THE MUSHKEGOWUK FIRST NATIONS

Chief Keith Corston - Chapleau Cree First Nation

Chief Norm Hardisty - Moose Cree First Nation

Chief Linda Joh - Taykwa Tagamou Nation

Chief Kim Rainville - Missanable Cree First Nation

Chief Andrew Solomon - Fort Albany First Nation

Chief Jonathon Solomon - Kashechewan First Nation

Chief Theresa Spence - Attawapiskat First Nation

Witness on behalf of Mushkegowuk Council:
Grand Chief Stan Loutit

CHIEFS OF THE MATAWA FIRST NATIONS

Chief Sonny Gagnon - Aroland First Nation

Chief Roger Wesley - Constance Lake First Nation

Chief Harry Papah - Eabametoong First Nation

Chief Veronica Waboose - Long Lake #58 First Nation

Chief Celia Echum - Ginoogaming First Nation

Chief - Marten Falls First Nation

Chief Peter Moonias - Neskantaga First Nation

Chief Roger Oskineegish - Nibinamik First Nation

Chief Cornelius Wabasse - Webequie First Nation

Witness on behalf of Matawa:
David Paul Achneepineskum, Chief Executive Officer

MEDIA STATEMENTS 2011-2012



JUNE 2011 - MAY 2012 MATAWA CHIEFS MEDIA RELEASES CHIEFS COUNCIL RELEASES:

Matawa First Nations form United Front to Protect Natural Resources

- The Matawa Chiefs sign a "Unity Declaration" and commit to protecting the natural resources and territories of the member First Nations.

Northern First Nations Come Together To Sign A Declaration For Implementation Of The Oral Treaty

- Seven Matawa First Nations and Seven Mushkegowuk First Nations sign a declaration to achieve the implementation of the Oral Treaty made by the government prior to the written treaty.

Matawa Chiefs Raise Alarm About Environmental Assessment In Their Traditional Territories

- The Matawa Chiefs request that a Joint Review Panel Assessment be implemented to safeguard the sustainability and integrity of their lands.

Matawa Chiefs Support Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug [KI] First Nation in its Struggle to Protect Traditional Homelands and to Assert the People's Inherent and Treaty Rights.

- The Matawa Chiefs are adding their voice and support in Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug [KI] First Nation's fight to protect their lands. Premier McGuinty promised to establish a joint panel to resolve mining and mineral exploration issues with KI and has yet to make good on his promise.

Matawa Chiefs Fear the Consequences of Canada's Choice to Use a Comprehensive Study EA in the Ring of Fire

- The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) has chosen to use the Comprehensive Study EA process for the Cliff's chromite project located in the Matawa territories. This decision is in direct conflict with the impacted First Nations as they have requested on numerous occasions that a Joint Review Panel EA be used to assess the potential threats and damages that will affect their lands and territories in the foreseeable future.

No Joint Panel Review Environmental Assessment, No Ring of Fire Development, says Matawa Chiefs

- The Matawa Chiefs withdraw their support for development in the 'Ring of Fire', citing they are not being heard when calling for a Joint Review Panel Environmental Assessment over the Comprehensive Study EA.

Matawa First Nations File Judicial Review, Continue Calls For Joint Review Panel on Ring of Fire Environmental Assessment

- The Matawa First Nations communities initiate a judicial review in response to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's (CEAA) failure to implement a Joint Review Panel Environmental Assessment (EA) regarding the potential for negative impacts from resource development and the associated infrastructure in the 'Ring of Fire' and the surrounding area.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Matawa First Nations form United Front to Protect Natural Resources

July 14th, 2011- Today all nine Chiefs from Matawa First Nations communities signed a historic declaration, making the commitment to stand together to protect the natural resources and territories of member First Nations. The Mamow- Wecheekapawetahteewiin- “Unity Declaration”, states that the nine Matawa communities agree that they “must stand together in order to ensure our nation is protected. Therefore, we assert our Aboriginal and Treaty Rights to the land, water and resources by requiring our written consent before any development activity may proceed.” The “Unity Declaration” further states that; “Failure to consult, accommodate and receive the consent of the First Nation(s) to proceed with any work or activity is an unjustified infringement upon our Aboriginal, Treaty and Custodial rights as First Nations.”

The declaration that was unanimously supported comes after a Matawa summit that was held in Neskantaga First Nation in early June, 2011, that focused on the development of a unified strategy to move forward on future developments and the protection of the First Nations lands, waters and resources. Chief Sonny Gagnon of Aroland First Nation says; “With this declaration, we hope to send a very powerful message to industry and government- Matawa First Nations are working as one. Any development occurring around any of our First Nations communities will impact us as one and this needs to be recognized”.

Chief Peter Moonias of Neskantaga First Nation says; “The nine First Nations take the position that our traditional territories are under our control and approval to operate in our territories and cannot be given by the government or any other entities”.



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MATAWA FIRST NATIONS



MUSHKEGOWUK COUNCIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NORTHERN FIRST NATIONS COME TOGETHER TO SIGN A DECLARATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ORAL TREATY

September 27, 2011 – Moose Cree First Nation, ON – Seven Matawa First Nations and Seven Mushkegowuk First Nations have signed a declaration to work together to achieve the implementation of the Oral Treaty. The Chiefs Declaration states that we are “...committed to exercising our inherent and treaty rights, without limitations imposed by others. We will consider the use of any options to ensure that the development of our homelands occurs only with the free, informed and prior consent of our First Nations.”

“Implementation of the Oral Treaty is long overdue,” said Chief Sonny Gagnon of Aroland First Nation. “For over 100 years we have kept the promises we made to the Crown Governments of Ontario and Canada. Now they will have to acknowledge, respect, and abide by the promises they made to us. From now on, the First Nations that signed this declaration will be living by the Oral Treaty. That means we do not go by the written treaty document, but by the actual promises that were made to us at the time Treaty No. 9 was signed.”

The James Bay Treaty (Treaty No. 9) was one of the last numbered treaties to be signed in Canada. It is the only treaty in Canada that was signed by a province. It was first signed in 1905 and 1906 by the Canadian Government, the Ontario Government, and the Cree, Ojibway and Algonquin Nations of what is now known as Northern and Northwestern Ontario. The Nations who signed in 1905-06 included those people occupying the area south of the Albany River. Adhesions with the remaining Cree and Ojibway Nations north of the Albany River were signed in 1929 and 1930.

“The Cree and Ojibway people have used oral tradition to pass down to each generation the promises which were made by the Treaty Commissioners to our People, and the promises that were made by our people to the Crown. Those promises did not include giving up our land or our right to govern ourselves,” said Mushkegowuk Grand Chief Stan Louttit. “This declaration will be an important tool for unity which we will use to protect our rights, which include the right to give or withhold consent on any activity taking place on our lands.”

“The right to consultation and accommodation, which stems from the written treaty and our First Nation inherent rights, is enshrined in Section 35 of the *Canadian Constitution Act, 1980*. Our Oral Treaty rights are just as significant and just as binding,” said Chief Celia Echum of Ginoogaming First Nation. “The People of Matawa and Mushkegowuk have had ties with each other since time immemorial. We are pleased to work together on implementation of the Oral Treaty.”

Matawa is a Tribal Council with a membership of nine Ojibway and Cree First Nation communities in Northern Ontario. Five Matawa First Nations are remote and are currently accessible only by air or winter ice road. Matawa First Nations Management provides advisory services and program delivery to Matawa First Nations.

Mushkegowuk Council has a membership of seven Cree First Nations, four in the James Bay Coastal area, and three First Nations south of the 50th parallel. It provides political advocacy and advisory services for its member First Nations.

The James Bay Treaty area encompasses almost two thirds of Ontario.

Declaration First Nation Signatories

Mushkegowuk First Nations

Chapleau Cree First Nation
Moose Cree First Nation
Taykwa Tagamou First Nation
Missanabie Cree First Nation
Fort Albany First Nation
Kashechewan First Nation
Attawapiskat First Nation

Matawa First Nations

Aroland First Nation
Constance Lake First Nation
Ginoogaming First Nation
Long Lake #58 First Nation
Neskantaga First Nation
Nibinamik First Nation
Webequie First Nation

For More Information Contact:

Stan Louttit, Grand Chief, Mushkegowuk Council (705) 288-0157

Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation (807) 876-2242

Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation (807) 329-5333



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Matawa Chiefs Raise Alarm About Environmental Assessment In Their Traditional Territories.

Thunder Bay September 30, 2011 – Matawa Chiefs are deeply concerned about the type of Environmental Assessment (EA) process that will be used to determine the impacts of two resource development projects in their traditional territories. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) is expected to announce the formal start of the EA process for the Cliffs Chromite Project in early October and for the Noront Eagle's Nest Project in early November. Concerns over the EA have prompted the Matawa First Nations Chiefs to demand that a "Joint Review Panel Environmental Assessment" process be adopted in order to safeguard the sustainability and integrity of their lands.

"These projects are on our traditional territories," said Chief Cornelius Wabasse of Webequie First Nation. "As one of the First Nations closest to these Ring of Fire developments, we expect the highest level of study to be conducted. Our people live off the land and use it for hunting, fishing and gathering activities. The land is our livelihood and needs to be respected by all people. We do not oppose development, but as caretakers of the land it is our duty to protect the land, water and air that was given to us by the Creator. This means ensuring that any negative environmental impacts are properly mitigated and avoided wherever possible."

The projects include developing mining and infrastructure components such as roads, electrical transmission and telecommunication lines on the traditional territories. These developments will profoundly affect the Matawa communities of Webequie, Marten Falls and Neskantaga First Nations. Many environmental impacts have already been identified for both projects.

Cliffs and Noront have stated that they would like a "Comprehensive Study EA". The Matawa First Nations Chiefs passed a resolution in May 2011 in support of a "Joint Review Panel EA". Currently, the Joint Review Panel EA is the most extensive and inclusive assessment required by government before approval of a project.

According to Kim Jorgenson, Environmental Assessment Officer for the Matawa Four Rivers Environmental Services Group, a Joint Review Panel EA is critical for this area. "It brings together the Provincial and Federal Governments to produce one EA for each project. There is no set timeline and more opportunity for public participation, allowing for oral hearings to be held in the communities. We are talking about one of the largest, intact boreal forest and wetland areas in the world. We need the best environmental assessment process that is currently available and that is the Joint Review Process EA. Ideally a new process would be developed to address all the potential environmental impacts from all proposed developments in the Ring of Fire Area, but for now a Joint Review Panel is the most appropriate EA for these projects."



The CEAA has indicated that there are three conditions that would convince the CEAA to move to a Joint Review Process:

1. Significant adverse effects on the environment
2. Significant public concern
3. Infringement on Aboriginal and Treaty Rights.

“There are most definitely environmental impacts to consider,” explained Jorgenson, “The roads proposed will cross approximately 100 bodies of water each, including three major rivers. The Cliffs project will re-route three waterways and drain several ponds at the Mine Site. These activities will definitely impact fish habitat and wildlife in the area.”

Other concerns surround pollution from the diesel-powered machinery and transporting diesel fuel. Man-made roads/corridors (including the slurry pipeline) can fragment the habitat of significant species (caribou, moose, etc.) disrupting their travel routes, and waste rock from mining has the potential to release harmful chemicals to the environment.

“As far as Treaty Rights go, there is definitely a reason to make this process a Joint Review Panel. The consultation process in a Comprehensive Study EA process, in our view, does not meet the government’s duty to consult with First Nations as per Section 35 of the *Canadian Constitution Act, 1980*. As well, we just signed a Declaration with Mushkegowuk Chiefs stating we are committed to implementing the Oral Treaty, which means any activities on our traditional territories require First Nation consent,” said Chief Peter Moonias of Neskantaga First Nation.

“Our staff has been visiting Matawa First Nations and the level of concern about these projects is very high. We have had large turn outs to our information sharing sessions, and the people in the communities are expressing their concerns to the government in record numbers. There is also concern in the non-native segment of the general public, and from environmental groups,” said Sarah Cockerton, Manager of Four Rivers, Matawa’s Environmental Service Group.

The Project Descriptions for the Cliffs Chromite Project and Noront Eagle’s Nest Project were accepted this past summer by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA), Triggering a 90 day Pre-Environmental assessment planning stage which helps determine what kind of EA will take place for the projects.

Matawa Chiefs encourage community members and concerned members of the public to write letters to the Federal Minister of Environment and to their local MPs expressing their concerns over the EA process. More information can found at:

www.fourriversmatawa.ca www.facebook.com/RingoffireEnvironment

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Four Rivers is a Matawa Environment Services Group that assists Matawa First Nations with actively managing lands and water resources within their traditional territories.

Ring of Fire is the name given to a resource rich geographical area located around McFaulds Lake, North of Marten Falls First Nation and west of Webequie First Nation, located in the heart of the boreal forest and encompassing the largest wetlands in the world.

For further information please contact:

Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation Tel (807) 353-5251
Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation Tel (807) 479-2570 Cell (807) 621-3611

Sarah Cockerton or Kim Jorgenson at Four Rivers, Matawa First Nations (807) 344-3575
Toll free: 1-800-463-2249



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Matawa Chiefs Support Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug [KI] First Nation in its Struggle to Protect Traditional Homelands and to Assert the People's Inherent and Treaty Rights.

Thunder Bay, October 11, 2011 – Matawa First Nations Chiefs are joining the growing number of voices calling on Premier McGuinty to honour the promise made to KI to establish a joint panel to resolve long-standing issues related to mineral exploration on their homelands. In 2009, just before the KI Chief and Council were jailed for opposing Platinex, the McGuinty Government promised to create a joint panel to resolve mining and mineral exploration issues with KI. The Chief and Council were released from jail by a Court of Appeal decision, but the Province did not follow through and create the joint panel. Matawa Chiefs supported the KI people and their leadership during their struggle with Platinex and with the Province of Ontario. The Matawa Chiefs are supporting KI in its struggle now.

"Today it is KI having to stand up to the government and to the mining companies, tomorrow it could be us," said Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation. "We have resource companies carrying out activities in our First Nation territories as well. We are trying to work with them. Matawa First Nations are not opposed to development, but industry and the government need to pay more than lip-service to First Nation rights to consultation and accommodation. They need to understand we also have an Inherent Right to make decisions about activities that will affect us. Matawa Chiefs supported KI in their opposition to Platinex, and we support them now."

Matawa First Nation Chiefs recently signed a joint declaration with Muskegowuk Chiefs in which the parties committed to work on implementing the oral promises made between the Cree and Ojibway people of Northern and Northwestern Ontario, and the crown governments of Canada and Ontario.

"...We are committed to exercising our inherent and treaty rights, without limitations imposed by others;

We will consider the use of any options to ensure that the development of our homelands occur only with the free, informed and prior consent of our First Nations...."

"The position of Matawa Chiefs in the Oral Treaty Joint Declaration is the same position we hold for all First Nations, especially those that are dealing with the encroachment of industry into their territories. The duty to consult rests with the government. The government needs to consult First Nations appropriately about activities proposed for their homelands. Premier McGuinty needs to do what he promised to do and create a joint panel to resolve KI's long-standing issues as soon as possible," said Chief Celia Echum of Ginoogaming First Nation.

Within our own territories, Matawa Chiefs are deeply concerned about the type of Environmental Assessment (EA) process that will be used to determine the impacts of two resource development projects in the Ring of Fire. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency has announced the formal start of the EA process for the Cliffs Chromite Project, and will announce the start of the EA process for Noront Eagle's Nest Project in early November. The CEAA currently intends to proceed with a Comprehensive EA process for the Cliffs project. Since May 2011 the Matawa First Nations Chiefs have repeatedly demanded that a "Joint Review Panel Environmental Assessment" process be adopted in order to safeguard the sustainability and integrity of their lands. Matawa First Nations are developing consultation and accommodation guidelines aimed at diminishing misunderstandings and clashes with industry and governments. It will also reflect the government-to-government relationship between First Nations, and Canada and Ontario.

For more information on the Matawa Chiefs support for KI contact:

Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation, (807) 479-2570
Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation, (807)876-2242

About Matawa First Nations

Matawa First Nations is a Tribal Council representing nine Ojibway and Cree First Nations in Northern Ontario. Five of the Matawa First Nations are remote and accessible only by air or winter ice road. Matawa First Nations Management provides a wide range of professional services and program delivery to support its member communities in the areas of administration and finance, health and social services, employment and training, education, communications, technical and environmental, and economic development.

About The Ring of Fire

The Ring of Fire (ROF) is the name given to an area of the James Bay Lowlands located in Matawa First Nations territories in Northern Ontario. The James Bay Lowlands contain one of the largest intact wetlands in the world. The Ring of Fire region is near McFaulds Lake, North of Marten Falls First Nation and West of Webequie First Nation. The area contains nickel, copper, gold and the largest untapped deposit of chromite in the world. Chromite is used to make stainless steel.

About the James Bay Treaty

The James Bay Treaty (Treaty No. 9) was one of the last numbered treaties to be signed in Canada. It is the only treaty in Canada that was signed by a province. It was first signed in 1905 and 1906 by the Crown governments of Canada and Ontario, and the Cree, Ojibway and Algonquin Nations of what is now known as Northern and Northwestern Ontario. The nations who signed in 1905-06 included those people occupying the area south of the Albany River. Adhesions with the remaining Cree and Ojibway nations north of the Albany River were signed in 1929 and 1930. The Crown governments rely solely on the textual version of the Treaty terms. The Aboriginal People of Treaty No. 9 maintain that the Treaty was a land sharing arrangement in which no land was given up and that they agreed to oral promises when they made treaty, many of which do not find expression in the Treaty text.





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Matawa Chiefs fear the consequences of Canada's choice to use a Comprehensive Study Environmental Assessment process in the Ring of Fire.

Thunder Bay, October 13, 2011 – Matawa Chiefs are in a state of disbelief about the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's (CEAA) decision to side with industry by choosing a Comprehensive Study Environmental Assessment (EA) process for the Cliff's Chromite Project near Webequie and Marten Falls First Nations. The Matawa Chiefs have been calling for a Joint Review Panel Environmental Assessment since May 2011.

"I don't understand how the CEAA can make this kind of choice," said Chief Sonny Gagnon of Aroland First Nation. "The area being affected is among one of the largest groups of intact wetlands in the world. These Ring of Fire developments are going to impact everyone in the region, one way or another, but especially the First Nations near these developments. These are First Nation homelands and we need the best EA process out there to protect them. A much smaller project near Marathon was bumped up to a Joint Panel Review EA process. Matawa First Nations would like the same for these larger projects in their region."

"Cliffs asked for a Comprehensive Study EA and got it. However, it is not the most appropriate EA for these projects. Currently, the Joint Review Panel EA is the most extensive and inclusive assessment required by government before approval of a project. It will give more time for community input and public hearings. First Nations are not stakeholders in these matters. These are our homelands since time immemorial," said Chief Peter Moonias of Neskantaga First Nation.

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) announced the formal start of the EA process for the Cliffs Chromite Project earlier this week by notifying First Nations that it plans to use the Comprehensive EA process. It will also make a decision about Noront Eagle's Nest Project in early November. For over five months Matawa Chiefs have been demanding that a Joint Review Panel EA be adopted in order to safeguard the sustainability and integrity of their lands.

According to Kim Jorgenson, Environmental Assessment Officer for the Matawa Four Rivers Environmental Services Group, a Joint Review Panel EA is critical for this area. "It brings together the Provincial and Federal Governments to produce one EA for each project. There is no set timeline and more opportunity for public participation, allowing for oral hearings to be held in the communities. We need the best environmental assessment process that is currently available and that is the Joint Review Process EA. Ideally a new process would be developed to address all the potential environmental impacts from all proposed developments in the Ring of Fire Area, but for now a Joint Review Panel is the most appropriate EA for these projects."

The projects include developing mining and infrastructure components such as roads, electrical transmission and telecommunication lines on the traditional territories. These developments will profoundly affect the Matawa communities of Webequie, Marten Falls and Neskantaga First Nations. Many environmental impacts have already been identified for both projects.

The CEAA has indicated that there are three conditions that would convince the CEAA to move to a Joint Review Process:

1. Significant adverse effects on the environment
2. Significant public concern
3. Infringement on Aboriginal and Treaty Rights.

Matawa Chiefs insist that the Cliffs and Noront Projects meet all of these conditions and require a Joint Review Panel EA process.

“There are most definitely environmental impacts to consider,” explained Jorgenson, “The roads proposed will cross approximately 100 bodies of water each, including three major rivers. The Cliffs project will re-route three waterways and drain several ponds at the Mine Site. These activities will definitely impact fish habitat and wildlife in the area.”

Matawa community members have been writing letters to the Federal Minister of Environment and to their local MPs expressing their concerns over the EA process. More information can found at:
www.fourriversmatawa.ca

For further information please contact:

Chief Sonny Gagnon, Aroland First Nation (807) 329-5970
Chief Peter Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation (807) 479-2570

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MEDIA ADVISORY URGENT: Matawa Chiefs to hold Media Conference Friday October 21, 2011

NO JOINT REVIEW PANEL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT, NO RING OF FIRE DEVELOPMENT SAY MATAWA CHIEFS

THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO – OCTOBER 21, 2011: Matawa Chiefs withdrew their support for development in the Ring of Fire (ROF) today. The Chiefs and the 8,000 people they represent are calling on Premier McGuinty and Prime Minister Harper to intervene in the Environmental Assessment (EA) process.

“We will be forced to resort to alternative measures if Canada and Ontario continue to ignore the First Nations that are being impacted by Ring of Fire developments,” said Chief Roger Wesley of Constance Lake First Nation.

Matawa Chiefs are outraged that the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) is proceeding with a Comprehensive Study EA. The Chiefs and their people have been calling for a Joint Review Panel EA for five months but the government is still not listening. Both the provincial and the federal governments are failing in their constitutional duty to consult and accommodate First Nations. According to the Chiefs, the government is telling them what they plan to do, but it is not consulting or accommodating them about how they want to be involved. The Chiefs maintain that the manner in which the government is proceeding with development in Northern Ontario is going to slowly destroy their traditional way of life, extinguish their treaty rights and destroy their homelands and their children’s future.

“We want development, but we also want to make sure that our lands, waters, wildlife, and our way of life are not destroyed in the process. The government is forcing us to take alternative action. They are not listening to us or consulting us in a meaningful way, and they are certainly not accommodating us,” said Chief Roger Wesley of Constance Lake First Nation.

The Matawa Chiefs explained that they do not want a repeat in Matawa homelands of what happened out west with the Athabasca River from the negative impact of the Oil Sands developments. First Nations in Alberta were not meaningfully consulted on those projects either.

“The government is failing in this whole Ring of Fire and northern development initiative. It is failing First Nations again. We need the Ontario Premier and the Prime Minister to intervene and come to the table. We need a government-to-government dialogue here. Visits from junior ministerial representatives telling us what is happening instead of asking



us how we want to participate is not consultation or accommodation. Government departments and ministries are not listening to us. Cliffs is already advertising its inappropriate consultation schedule, and the CEAA posted its public invitation to comment with a map of Northern Ontario that makes it look like no one lives near these projects. The map didn't have a single First Nation community on it! We aren't even on their radar. That is offensive to our people. That is exactly the way government views the people who live where these developments are happening, like we don't exist," said Chief Eli Moonias of Marten Fall First Nation.

"We are done with repeating ourselves. The province needs our cooperation and the people of Ontario and Canada need our cooperation. Government is creating conflict between First Nations and industry because they are failing in their duty to consult and accommodate," said Chief Cornelius Wabasse of Webequie First Nation.

All nine Matawa Chiefs are unified in their position. The Chiefs are meeting with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency and the Province of Ontario Ring of Fire (ROF) Coordinator Christen Kaszyck on Thursday October 20 and Friday October 21.

The Chiefs will hold a media conference during the last day of their discussions with the Federal and Provincial Government.

The media conference is scheduled to take place on Friday October 21 at 12:00 pm at the Da Vinci Centre, 340 South Waterloo Street.

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The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) announced the formal start of the EA process for the Cliffs Chromite Project earlier last week by notifying First Nations that it plans to use the Comprehensive EA process. It will also make a decision about Noront Eagle's Nest Project in early November. For over five months Matawa Chiefs have been demanding that a Joint Review Panel EA be adopted in order to safeguard the sustainability and integrity of their lands.

A Joint Review Panel EA is critical for this area. It brings together the Provincial and Federal Governments to produce one EA for each project. There is no set timeline and more opportunity for public participation, allowing for oral hearings to be held in the communities. First Nations need the best environmental assessment process that is currently available and that is the Joint Review Process EA.

The projects include developing mining and infrastructure components such as roads, electrical transmission and telecommunication lines on the traditional territories. These developments will profoundly affect the Matawa communities of Webequie, Marten Falls and Neskantaga First Nations. Many environmental impacts have already been identified for both projects.



The CEAA has indicated that there are three conditions that would convince the CEAA to move to a Joint Review Process:

1. Significant adverse effects on the environment
2. Significant public concern
3. Infringement on Aboriginal and Treaty Rights.

Matawa Chiefs insist that all of these conditions exist right now and a Joint Review Panel EA is critical.

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Ring of Fire is the name given to a resource rich geographical area located in Matawa First Nation homelands and traditional territories, north of Marten Falls First Nation and east of Webequie First Nation, in the heart of the boreal forest and the largest collection of intact wetlands in the world.

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Media Release

MATAWA FIRST NATIONS FILE JUDICIAL REVIEW, CONTINUE CALLS FOR JOINT REVIEW PANEL ON RING OF FIRE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Assembly of First Nations, Chiefs of Ontario, Nishnawbe Aski Nation and Mushkegowuk Council Show Support

OTTAWA, ONTARIO - NOVEMBER 7, 2011 – First Nation leaders from Northern Ontario gathered in Ottawa today, sending a strong message to the Government of Canada about resource development in their territory.

Matawa First Nations - a group of nine First Nation communities in Northern Ontario have filed a Judicial Review regarding the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's (CEAA) failure to implement a Joint Review Panel Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Cliffs Chromite project in the Ring of Fire area. The CEAA has opted for a Comprehensive Study EA with no realistic opportunity for First Nations to participate. The Matawa Chiefs insist that a Comprehensive Study EA will fast track the EA process for government and the resource company, but put First Nation communities at serious risk.

"For over five months our Chiefs have been insisting that the CEAA move to a negotiated Joint Review Panel EA process, but they continue to ignore us. We are remote communities with no capacity to respond to a Comprehensive Study EA. In order to participate we need adequate funding and expertise, which none of our First Nations have received. The government needs to listen to us. Coming to our communities and telling us what you are going to do is not consultation. The Federal Government has completely failed in its duty to consult and accommodate our First Nations. We want to negotiate an agreement on how we will participate, but they have not responded to our request. We have no option now but to file the Judicial Review. We want to work with the government and the companies to participate in this process. A negotiated Joint Review Panel EA is the way to do that," said Aroland First Nation Chief Sonny Gagnon.

"These are our homelands and traditional territories. We will feel the impacts of this mine for years to come. We want development, but we don't want another Alberta tar sands situation in our backyards and on our homelands. We have to have the best environmental assessment process currently available in order to safeguard our people, our children, the land, the waterways, and the wildlife, now and into the future. We need to talk about the environment in a forum that respects our knowledge of the land, our oral tradition and our decision making process," said Neskantaga First Nation Chief Peter Moonias.

"More than half of our Mushkegowuk communities are along the James Bay Coastal area. The rivers that will flow by the tailings from these mines will flow right to Mushkegowuk communities. Mushkegowuk Chiefs have signed a declaration



with Matawa Chiefs that we will support each other. We intend to stand with the Matawa First Nations on any action they may take to protect their land and their communities,” said Mushkegowuk Grand Chief Stan Louttit.

Grand Chief Stan Beardy of Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), a Political, Territorial Organization (PTO) with a membership of 50 First Nations in Ontario, supports the Matawa Chiefs. “First Nations have Aboriginal rights and treaty rights and other rights recognized by the Canadian Constitution and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The bottom line is that the proposed Ring of Fire development cannot proceed without the free, prior, and informed consent of the affected First Nations. That is the law and the standard of engagement,” said NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy.

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo and AFN Ontario Regional Chief Angus Toulouse expressed their support for a negotiated Joint Review Panel which respects First Nations free, prior and informed consent as confirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

“Many First Nations across Canada are working together with governments and industry on successful economic development plans and projects that respect First Nations’ relationships and rights to the land for the benefit of their communities and Canada’s economy as a whole,” said AFN National Chief Shawn Atleo. “I strongly urge the federal and provincial governments and industry to work together with the Matawa First Nations on a negotiated Joint Review Panel EA process that ensures their rights are respected and development is sustainable for economic and community development today and into the future.”

“We believe that if the people of Ontario and Canada understood the scope of the Ring of Fire projects they would be calling on the Federal Government to do the very best environmental assessment possible. That would include a negotiated process with meaningful First Nation participation. Chiefs of Ontario stand with Matawa First Nations and support their actions,” said AFN Ontario Regional Chief Angus Toulouse.

Matawa Chiefs withdrew their support from any Ring of Fire development on October 20, 2011 until the CEAA implements a negotiated Joint Review Panel Environmental Assessment instead of the Comprehensive Study EA Process. The Chiefs sent letters to the Premier of Ontario, to Prime Minister Harper, and to the Federal Minister of the Environment indicating that the Matawa Chiefs want to work with the government to develop a Memorandum of Agreement on First Nation participation and involvement in the EA process. They are still waiting on an appropriate response to that request. In the meantime, the CEAA has taken advertisements out in newspapers announcing the start of the Comprehensive Study process without any consultation with the people who live in area. The advertisements include a map of Northern Ontario where a few towns are identified as being hundreds of miles from the mine site, but not a single First Nation community is identified on that map.

Because the timelines established under a Comprehensive Study EA leave no possibility for any meaningful consultation of First Nations, and because First Nations have no capacity to respond to the process, the Chiefs have filed a Judicial Review. The Chiefs maintain that the CEAA is ignoring its own guidelines. The CEAA has stated that a Joint Review Panel can be established by the Minister of the Environment (Minister Kent) if it meets 3 conditions; adverse environmental impacts; infringement of Treaty and Aboriginal rights and; significant public concern. The Cliffs project meets all three of these requirements.

This month the CEAA is expected to announce the beginning of the environmental assessment process for the Noront Eagle’s Nest Project (Nickel-Copper Mine) also in the Ring of Fire area. The Chiefs met with the Office of the Auditor General, Commissioner of Environment and Sustainable Development to discuss the recommendations from the October 2011 Report to the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development (Chapter 2 Assessing Cumulative Environmental Effects of Oil Sands Project), which made the following recommendation:



“We will be looking for a plan that has clear objectives, timelines, roles and responsibilities, and performance outcomes to help Parliament track the government’s progress. In particular, we expect the plan and its implementation to be guided by meaningful and enduring partnerships with First Nations communities. I also hope that lessons from the oil sands environmental monitoring commitment will be applied to other regions that the federal government has declared to be “ecological hotspots,” from Canada’s North to the Bay of Fundy and Great Lake regions.”

As Chief Gagnon noted at the end of that meeting, “I hope that we are not sitting here in 10 years with a problem like the Alberta tar sands.”

Ring of Fire is located in Matawa First Nations homelands in Northern Ontario. It is northwest of Marten Falls First Nation and east of Webequie First Nation, and northeast of Neskantaga First Nation in the James Bay Lowlands, which holds one of the largest collection of intact wetlands in the world. The Ring of Fire also holds immeasurable wealth in the form of precious metals and minerals, and has the potential to drive Ontario and Canada’s economy for decades.

Matawa First Nations are situated in Northern Ontario. Five of the nine Matawa First Nation communities are remote and only accessible by air or winter ice road. The impacts of the mines and the associated infrastructure have the potential to seriously impact all Matawa First Nations.

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ABORIGINAL FIRST NATION



CONSTANCE LAKE
FIRST NATION



OJIBWA FIRST NATION



LONG LAKE FIRST NATION



Neskantaga
First Nation



WEBEQUIE FIRST NATION



WEBEQUIE FIRST NATION

Prepared for the 24th
Annual General Meeting
July 31 to August 2, 2012 //
Hosted by Webequie First Nation