

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, November 25, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **MATAWA FIRST NATIONS PRESENT CONCERNS ON BILL 132: FIRST NATIONS ARE THE 'INVESTORS OF CERTAINTY' IN DEVELOPMENT**

**TORONTO, ON:** – Today, the Chiefs of the Matawa First Nations (MFN) presented to the Ontario Standing Committee on General Government (SC-GG) regarding Bill 132, also known as 'An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Act and revoking various Regulations' tabled on Monday, October 28, 2019 by the Hon. Prabmeet Sarkaria, Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction. On November 6, 2019, MFN issued their [Statement on Hidden Mining Act Provisions in the Proposed 'Better for People, Smarter for Business Act'](#) saying that the proposed bill was deeply problematic for them.

The presentation to the SC-GG was made by Chief Harvey Yesno of Eabametoong First Nation, Chief Celia Echum of Ginoogaming First Nation and Chief Veronica Waboose of Long Lake #58 First Nation on behalf of the Matawa Chiefs Council (the presentation is available upon request or can be downloaded on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario website). The presentation was further to the MFN statement made on November 6, 2019 and included these main points:

- The specific amendments to Sections 140, 141 and 143 of the Ontario *Mining Act* are intended to reduce the red-tape of Aboriginal consultation requirements on mining closure plans that are required before a new mine opens in Ontario; and these mine closure plans are now on a 45-day approval fast-track timeline.
- The [Landore decision](#) pursued and won by Eabametoong First Nation in 2018 demonstrates that Ontario is susceptible to significant internal policy failures when industry pressures the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines (ENDM) Directors to issue mining permits.
- The Ontario government has also been silent on the impacts of the proposed repeal or amendment of the *Far North Act*, 2010 that will potentially strip the *Mining Act* of its *Far North Act* related provisions. The *Far North Act* and the *Mining Act* are related legislation.
- The Matawa Chiefs have requested that the Standing Committee on General Government advise or report to the Ontario legislature that the **Bill 132 – Schedules 8 and 16** related to the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines (ENDM) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) be removed from Bill 132; including proposed additional changes to Ontario regulations that were not expressly included in Bill 132.
- The Matawa Chiefs Council are formally on the record that the Ontario Mining Working Group announced on March 4, 2019 including Aboriginal representation – does not represent the interests of Matawa First Nations as a region, and as First Nations of the Far North.
- **Ontario has to be innovative and willing to work alongside First Nations to secure our mutual interests of economic and social prosperity.** The Matawa First Nations and potentially all First Nations of James Bay Treaty # 9 cannot be expected to be excluded from the next national economic engine of Canada.
- **The Matawa First Nations are not opposed to development, but are positioned to be meaningful partners with government and industry to deliver certainty for investment and development in the North.**

The SC-GG will be holding public hearings from November 19 – 29, 2019. Those who do not wish to make an oral presentation but wish to comment on the Bill may send a written submission by 5:00 pm (EST) on Friday, November 29, 2019.

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**For more information, please contact** Carol Audet, Communications Manager – Matawa First Nations at (807) 632-9663 or by email at [caudet@matawa.on.ca](mailto:caudet@matawa.on.ca)

## QUOTES

*“Matawa member First Nations will lead and deliver the next economic boom of this province. Equitable partnerships between Matawa First Nations-Government-Industry will result in investment opportunities on a national and international scale. Matawa First Nations are the partners and investors of certainty required for economic and social prosperity.”*

*—Chief Harvey Yesno, Eabametoong First Nation*

*“Matawa First Nations are fully aware of the potential impacts to our Inherent Aboriginal and Treaty Rights with the anticipated significant developments that will occur on our homelands. In today’s environment, it would be absurd and negligent for our communities not to call on the Ontario government to develop a new Crown-Inherent Aboriginal Rights-Treaty approach to develop the North.”*

*—Chief Celia Echum, Ginoogaming First Nation*

*“Long Lake # 58 First Nation has been of the constant position to support our remote Matawa First Nations to meet the exciting challenge of development and the opportunities that are expected by our people and communities.”*

*—Chief Veronica Waboose, Long Lake #58 First Nation*

