

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CERTAINTY FROM FIRST NATIONS IS THE KEY TO THE EMERGING NORTHERN ECONOMY: MATAWA FIRST NATIONS TO THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT'S STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

THUNDER BAY, ON: – Today, the Chiefs of the Matawa First Nations (MFN) presented to the Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs (SC-FEA), saying that certainty from First Nations is the key to the emerging Northern Ontario economy.

The presentation was made by Chief Harvey Yesno of Eabametoong First Nation, and Chief Cornelius Wabasse of Webequie First Nation on behalf of the Matawa Chiefs Council. It is the second time a presentation was made to a Standing Committee of the Ontario legislature. The [pre-budget submission](#) included these main points:

- The true potential of the development of the North of Ontario may perhaps be in the trillions of dollars and must be considered in its full potential for wealth creation and revenue generation that will benefit First Nations, government and industry as a whole.
- The development of the north will be multi-generational and international in scope.
- ***Certainty from First Nations is the key to the emerging northern economy.***

Specific Recommendations to Advance Both First Nation and Ontario Economies Forward:

- The Province of Ontario consider Matawa member First Nations as equitable partners and develop a comprehensive approach to wealth creation and revenue generation.
- Discussions on a government-to-government basis must include timeframes for specific deliverables and points of agreement to advance the Matawa member First Nation and Ontario economies forward.
- The current realities of the north and remote First Nations must be a priority to be addressed and that any economic plans are designed to produce immediate and tangible improvements in the quality of life and reduce the high cost of living for Matawa First Nation families and members. This must be a joint effort and priority of First Nations and the government of Ontario for development of the north and the emerging northern economy.

Opportunities to comment will close on Friday January 24, 2020 at 6:00 pm. The Matawa Chiefs Council look forward to the Standing Committee's report and outcomes to be reflected in Ontario Budget 2020.

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

QUOTES

“Certainty from First Nations means that we are equal partners and the decision-makers on the issues and circumstances that impact our communities and our economy. Northern and remote First Nations have survived many generations and long-term poverty to now be in the position of achieving a better future and to improve the lives of all our members.”

—Chief Harvey Yesno, Eabametoong First Nation

“The emerging northern economy and how we can work together is an important issue that will impact every individual, family, business and industry across Ontario - from the remote north to Thunder Bay to Toronto and Queen’s Park. A comprehensive approach that includes and addresses the high cost of living, and improving the quality of life and well-being of northern and remote First Nations will ensure we all prosper together.”

—Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation

