

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MATAWA FIRST NATIONS FORGE NEW WAY FORWARD LOOKING TO MAJOR COMPANIES TO ASSIST IN CONTROLLING DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

[Toronto, ON:] – Chiefs of the Matawa First Nations in Northern Ontario announced Monday they are creating a New Way Forward in developing community infrastructure in their traditional territory. Discussions are ongoing with PCL Construction, Enterprise Canada, Ontario Power Generation and EPCOR Canada to determine how best to meet the infrastructure needs in Matawa communities.

Matawa First Nations will play a lead role in developing Northern infrastructure and guiding the Emerging Northern Economy. Through new relationships with leading Canadian companies, an innovative new approach to financing and managing the construction the needs of these communities can be defined for Matawa communities who have long waited for crucial infrastructure that will bring their people the stability and hope that they deserve.

The announcement at PDAC 2020 in Toronto is the result of months of work looking at the control of development in the Matawa region while also preparing for future development needs. Matawa and these partner companies are discussing the creation of a corporation to oversee construction and financing of infrastructure across the region.

Key to the success of this commitment is that the communities themselves are moving the process forward, with decision-making power on what is built, when and how. This unique approach can allow Matawa First Nations to control development of their community infrastructure, while protecting their Inherent, Aboriginal Rights and their Homelands.

Through the assistance of the federal government—Matawa First Nations have been able to move forward on this ground-breaking new approach where Matawa communities control their future.

QUOTES:

“Government is slow to change its processes of funding for some of our basic needs and our communities do not have any more time to wait. The MOUs bring new hope and will be the faster vehicle to bring us healing and wellness through things like infrastructure development – housing, culture and language centres, improvement to schools, play equipment and recreational facilities for our children and youth.”

– Chief Judy Desmoulin, Long Lake #58 First Nation

“I think looking at the regional side, we need to work together and identify regional priorities and how they can benefit our First Nation communities. Each First Nation has their own autonomy and will benefit from our communities working together as a whole. There is a lot of work to do and the Matawa member First Nations communities will formulate the structures and distributions ourselves.”

– Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation

“As of today, March 2, 2020, my community has been in a State of Emergency for 234 days and under a Boil Water Advisory for 6,788 days. We are in dire need of infrastructure of every kind, with an urgent need for adequate proper housing. With crowded conditions throughout my community, and even 18 people living in one housed—we have an immediate need for 204 houses. To be able to build infrastructure in a more proactive way is a welcome opportunity to level the playing field.”

– Chief Harvey Yesno, Eabametoong First Nation

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