



## CHIEFS COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, August 11, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### MATAWA CHIEFS' COUNCIL CALL FOR ANISHINABEK NATION GRAND CHIEF REG NIGANOBE TO RETRACT COMMENTS ENDORSING THE ACCELERATION OF ONTARIO'S ACCESS TO DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTH

**[Thunder Bay, ON]** In response to a CBC article published on August 10, 2022 titled 'Ring of Fire development possible with proper First Nations consultation, says grand council chief', that included comments by the Anishinabek Nation Grand Chief Reg Niganobe on the future development of the Ring of Fire, located in the Matawa member First Nations homelands and traditional territory, the Matawa Chiefs Council issued the following statement:

*"It is highly unusual and improper for a Grand Chief to make comments related to the land, rights, interests and issues of other First Nations that are not within their own territory. Overreaching into the affairs of northern and remote First Nations, beyond their own treaty boundaries is highly inappropriate and irregular.*

*The public of Ontario must be made aware that the Matawa/Ontario Regional Framework Agreement (RFA), signed in 2014 was abruptly terminated with the election of the Ford government in 2018, dismissing a regional and inclusive approach to the potential development of the North. The Anishinabek Nation however, has been the beneficiary of a mirror process in the south related to mineral development, riding on the coat tails of the Matawa member First Nations. As the Matawa process was terminated, the Anishinabek Nation process has continued to be funded to Ontario's advantage.*

*Unfortunately, these statements are nothing more than colonial puppetry and an indication of how the Province of Ontario is attempting to isolate the northern First Nations of James Bay Treaty No. 9 and Treaty No. 5. The Matawa member First Nations are the Indigenous rights holders in our Matawa homelands and traditional territories.*

*Furthermore, all First Nations across Ontario should be concerned with the Anishinabek Nation's blanket approval of Ontario's duty to consult and accommodate policies and the colonial processes that they have now publicly endorsed. These statements will have a long-term impact on the rights and interests of First Nations across Ontario for the next decade.*

*The Matawa Chiefs Council are sincerely disappointed that the Anishinabek Nation and its Grand Chief are being used as enforcers of the colonial mindset and mechanisms to exert pressure on the Matawa member First Nations or attempt to appear to speak or grant consent on behalf of our First Nations. The Anishinabek Nation is not our proxy on these issues. The Matawa Chiefs Council reject these inappropriate and misguided comments, and we request the Anishinabek Nation Grand Chief publicly retract these comments."*





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### Notes to Media Release:

- The Matawa Chiefs Council and Matawa First Nations represent 9 First Nations and respect the autonomy of each member First Nation.
- This statement is without prejudice to the positions Long Lake #58 First Nation takes, or may take, on the issue of whether Long Lake #58 First Nation is a party to any Treaty.
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- The Matawa Chiefs Council reserves the right to re-assess and further its positions on this issue.

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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)

