



CHIEFS COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MATAWA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022 - MATAWA CHIEFS COUNCIL SETTING A CLEAR PATH FORWARD ON ISSUES IMPACTING THEIR COMMUNITIES

[Webeque, ON:] – Following the dialogue and discussions of Chiefs and community delegations at the Matawa Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2022 held in Webeque First Nation last week—formal resolutions were adopted to: advance the process of developing a First Nations driven political process on mining in Ontario, reject NAN-COO-AFN processes moving forward without the consent of Indigenous rights holders and reject Métis assertions into the Matawa homelands and territories.

One of the most significant directions from the Matawa AGM is the rejection of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) proposed Treaty Relationship discussions with Canada, the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) and Assembly of First Nations (AFN) proposed First Nations Economic Growth and Prosperity Tables, and the Government of Canada’s (Natural Resources Canada) National Benefit-Sharing Framework process most recently underway.

“Mining is an important and complicated issue challenging First Nations across Ontario land subject both to Treaty and unceded lands. The Matawa Chiefs Council (MCC) recognize the efforts of Eabametoong First Nation with the *Landore* decision. It is our intention to assist and support a First Nation-driven mining approach for the consideration of the Chiefs of Nishnawbe Aski Nation and the Chiefs of Ontario Assembly going forward,” said Chief Bruce Achneepineskum of Marten Falls First Nation. “First Nations north and south of the undertaking must work together in order to deliver the maximum rights recognition and economic benefits that are required for our communities to be self-determining, and secure our own prosperity and future.”

“As Treaty rights holders, the MCC are alarmed and will not stand by to watch the potential encroachment on the Matawa homelands and traditional territories,” said Chief Wayne Moonias of Neskantaga First Nation. “These parties and organizations must respect proper protocols and the autonomy of our communities who are the vested Indigenous rights holders. Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Chiefs of Ontario and the Assembly of First Nations are not proxies or the granters of consent on any issue that impacts the Matawa member First Nations. Our jurisdiction and title lies within our communities and our People.”

“On the issue of Métis claims into the Matawa homelands and traditional territories—the Matawa Chiefs Council want to clarify that the issue is based on the level of recognition being granted to a people/group that does not have the historic and ancient ties to the land that we call home. Our communities do not exclude the non-status people who are part of our families and communities,” said Ogamakan Michael Sugarhead of Nibinamik First Nation. “The Matawa Chiefs Council position is intended to state that the Métis Nation of Ontario corporate organization that has been recognized by the signing of a self-government agreement by the Government of Canada and in legislation by the Province of Ontario are not the *constitutional equals* of our First Nation communities.”

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