

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MATAWA CHIEFS' COUNCIL ACKNOWLEDGE THE SUPPORT OF THE CHIEFS OF ONTARIO IN ASSERTING THEIR SOVEREIGNTY, RIGHTS, INTERESTS AND JURISDICTION IN THE RING OF FIRE REGION

TORONTO, ON: From the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, Six Nations of the Grand River, the Anishinabek, Haudenosaunee, and Huron-Wendatpart at the Chiefs of Ontario Fall Chiefs Assembly held in Toronto November 15-16-17, 2022 the Matawa Chiefs Council presented to the First Nations across Ontario on the development of the Ring of Fire Region. In briefing the Chiefs Assembly on the complex issues, Ontario First Nations leaders voiced and demonstrated support of the Matawa Chiefs Council positions related to their sovereignty, rights, interests and jurisdiction in their traditional territories and homelands.

- The Matawa member First Nation traditional territory and homelands includes the Ring of Fire chromite deposit discovered in 2008, in addition to potentially 13 critical minerals across 51 sites that are currently being explored within the combined Matawa region, James Bay Treaty No. 9 (1905-06 and 1929-30) and the territory of the Long Lake No. 58 First Nation; and
- The Matawa region is the location of other significant and yet to be discovered critical mineral deposits and multi-faceted resource sectors (land, hydro, forestry etc.) that will emerge and coincide with the development of the North and the Ring of Fire region; and
- The Matawa Chiefs Council define the development of the North and the Ring of Fire Region within a broad spectrum that will require political, legal and technical assessments within a changing and evolving situation that is emerging and unfolding, and reserve the right to continually reassess positions and statements as required in order to protect and implement the rights and interests of their members; and
- The development of the North and the Ring of Fire region will be a multi-generational national and international transformative opportunity for Matawa member First Nations as the Indigenous Rights Holders; and
- The Matawa region will be a lead First Nation territory in the transition to the new global green economy, and a significant contributor to the shift about to occur in Canada that has been described as only comparable to the Industrial revolution by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland on November 3, 2022 in Canada's Fall Economic Statement 2022 delivered in the House of Commons; and
- The Governments of Canada and Ontario, the United States of America and their allies are positioning within their government resource development agendas, strategic investments for industry, military and national security interests, revised and reformed legislations, policies and regulations, critical mineral and strategic raw material supply chains to focus on and directly impact the development of the North and the Matawa region due to the significant resources within the territory.

QUOTES

Chief Bruce Achneepineskum, Marten Falls First Nation

"The potential for the development of the Ring of Fire region will advance our First Nations sovereignty in our traditional territory and homeland. The agenda must be First Nations-driven and not determined by government, industry and environmental interests only. We must ensure that the multi-generational impact be maximized to improve the lives of our First Nations people."

Chief Ramona Sutherland, Constance Lake First Nation

"The Matawa Chiefs Council works hard to maintain unity and meet the challenges of 9 autonomous remote and road access communities. We work together on very difficult topics and strive to develop consensus in the best interest of our community members and our future generations. The Matawa Chiefs Council are working together to protect our traditional territory and homelands."

Chief Wayne Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation

"Neskantaga First Nation has remained consistent in advocating for the free, prior, informed consent of the Indigenous Rights Holders in our homelands. It is imperative that the unified voice of our elders, men, women and youth are heard and our community protocols will be respected. First Nations are waiting for the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario to demonstrate the proper respect and for an appropriate government-to-government relationship and dialogue to be established."

Chief Sol Atlookan, Eabametoong First Nation

"Eabametoong First Nation (EFN) is a large remote community, and our homelands stretch across the northern river systems, including and beyond what industry calls the 'Ring of Fire'. EFN has very strong rights and interests throughout the region, and the rights of our members will be respected. We have continually pressed against the status quo of Crown decision-making and expect any serious government or industry player to recognize their need for EFN support for any potential development. The reality is that no decisions can be made yet about the ring of fire roads or possible mines; the assessments must give our membership an informed view of the risks and possibilities of those things in due time, and then, when our people have all the right information to make a strong decision, then that decision must be respected. EFN leadership will continue to press for the informed consent of our people to be respected in every decision process. Without that foundation, no partnership in the north will be strong enough to last. If we're really talking about forever change to our homelands, there must be a new approach to shared decision-making and real commitment to positive generational change driven by our people."

Chief Bob Chiblow, Mississauga First Nation #8

"Mississauga First Nation #8 support our northern brothers and sisters. It is imperative their concerns are recognized and seriously considered when dealing with activities in their traditional territory that will affect their way of life. In Solidarity, BAA MAA."

Chief Wilfred King, Gull Bay First Nation

"Gull Bay First Nation supports the Matawa communities in their assertions of jurisdiction of their territories in relation to opposing the Ring of Fire development until they are ready and gain their free and prior informed consent."

MPP Sol Mamakwa for Kiiwetinoong

"This government has no right to request development on our treaty territories without a plan to improve baseline necessities like water and infrastructure, and not without the full, informed and prior consent of all the impacted Nations. The Premier and this government have to honour Ontario's treaty obligation to the people of Treaty 9 before allowing development."

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