

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MATAWA FIRST NATIONS WELCOME FEDERAL INVESTMENTS FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY READINESS ASSESSMENT PROJECT

THUNDER BAY, ON: Matawa First Nations today welcomed federal investments for a Renewable Energy Readiness Assessment (RERA) project as announced by The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, and Member of Parliament for Thunder Bay—Superior North on behalf of the Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, and Minister responsible for [FedNor](#). The investment is provided through the [Northern Ontario Development Program](#).

More than \$240,000 from the Government of Canada will help the Matawa First Nation communities of Aroland, Constance Lake, Eabametoong, Ginoogaming, Long Lake #58, Marten Falls, Neskantaga, Nibinamik and Webequie First Nations to explore a renewable energy production approach forward to address high fuel prices, get off diesel, prioritize planning with industry and establish sustainable community energy loads that integrate renewable energy into the landscape, and allow each community to benefit.

With Matawa First Nations as no exception, renewable energy is becoming increasingly popular among Indigenous Peoples because it aligns with cultural beliefs and relationship to the land. It allows energy sources to return to working for the people and the environment in a reciprocal net-zero relationship. In Ontario, there are over 80 renewable energy projects that are ongoing.

The RERA will be overseen by the *Matawa Energy Planning Committee* made up of representatives from the nine (9) Matawa First Nations. Their work will include engaging with their communities and experts in the field to make recommendations and develop an action plan. The RERA is expected to be completed by spring 2018.

QUOTES

“Energy has always been important to our First Nations peoples. Our eco-system, the animals, and all life forms rely on energy for survival. The creator provides many natural gifts like the sun, water, wind, plants, and trees that can be harnessed to create energy for our First Nations. We all need energy to heat and light our households, to cook food, to run our schools, child care and health centres and to run businesses. This is a major capacity building initiative that will allow us to build strong, healthy First Nation communities as we develop energy independence. Renewable energy, for our First Nations, is the most culturally appropriate and positions us in our continued role as stewards of the land.”

– *David Paul Achneepineskum, CEO, Matawa First Nations Management*

“The development of energy projects will enable our First nations to assert their autonomy by generating revenue through the sale of power which creates greater economic self-sufficiency to address local community concerns. Due to regulatory and environmental issues, it is equally important for industry such as mining proponents, pipeline operators and manufacturing facilities to reduce their dependence on polluting, unreliable, imported energy. The Matawa renewable energy assessment project will empower our First Nations to make informed decisions when it comes to prioritizing their energy generation and transmission needs.”

– *Jason Rasevych, Economic Development Advisor - Matawa First Nations Management*

QUOTES - CONTINUED

“The Matawa Chiefs have a vision to develop micro-grids and energy independence in our First Nations. We are very excited about this project as we explore the many ways energy can be extracted, refined, produced and transported while paying close attention our First Nations natural and geographical strengths. For far too long, our remote First Nations have been reliant on expensive, polluting diesel generators that block local and regional economic development. We aim to change this structure reduce or eliminate diesel in our First Nations and move towards a healthy and prosperous communities.”

- Jonathan Neegan, Project Coordinator - Matawa First Nations Management

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Matawa First Nations Management is a Tribal Council providing a variety of advisory services and programs to 8 Ojibway and Cree First Nations in James Bay Treaty No. 9 and 1 First Nation in the Robinson-Superior Treaty area. Follow us on Facebook or Twitter @MatawaFNM.

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