



CHIEFS COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, April 3, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MATAWA CHIEFS COUNCIL ISSUE FORMAL RESPONSE TO ONTARIO GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED BILL 71 – BUILDING MORE MINES ACT: ONTARIO PREPARES ITSELF TO BOOM ON MINING AND CRITICAL MINERALS WHILE MINIMIZING ENVIRONMENTAL OVERSIGHT AND AVOIDING CROWN RESPONSIBILITIES TO FIRST NATIONS ACROSS THE NORTH

MATAWA TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES AND HOMELANDS: As the Matawa member First Nations have taken time to review and consider the impacts of *Ontario's Bill 71 – Building More Mines Act* introduced in Queen's Park on March 2, 2023 by Mines Minister, the Honourable George Pirie, Matawa Chiefs Council issued a [formal response](#) to the Standing Committee on the Interior in advance of Standing Committee hearings which will be held this week in Timmins (April 5) and Sudbury (April 6). Some key points of the formal response included:

1. Matawa member First Nations were informed of amendments – not consulted.
2. 'Recovery' Permits are potentially avoiding the duty to consult and accommodate, avoiding historic grievances and new revenue interests in closed mines now being reassessed and returned to production.
3. Potential 'Fox guarding the henhouse' scenario developing across Ontario as mines will be self-monitoring or privatized on mine closure plans. Mine closure plans are required in order for mines to open, and chart the course of responsibility for the mine when a mine is closed.
4. The proposed Ontario Mining Act amendments proposed by Bill 71 impact Northern First Nations including communities located in the remote Far North. The Standing Committee on this issue are holding hearings only in Timmins and Sudbury.
5. The cumulative impact of speeding up the mining cycle in Ontario - to the benefit of industry and investors – will place the burden onto First Nations Councils, administrations and finances. The Province of Ontario must be held accountable for this exploitive and aggressive approach contrary to the principles of reconciliation and the Spirit and Intent of Treaty.

MATAWA CHIEFS' COUNCIL UNIFIED POLITICAL STATEMENT

- The Matawa Chiefs Council close the statement marking the need for Ontarians to understand the cumulative wholesale legislative, policy and regulatory changes ("the legislative bulldozer") that have been made in incremental phases on all aspects of the Ontario lands legislations.
- A legislative, legal and public relations strategy prepared by the Crown employed lawyers of the Province of Ontario has been planned and deployed before our eyes.
- The Matawa member First Nations maintain the position that we have an interest in all aspects of resource development including mining and the extraction of the minerals and other strategic and critical resources from our traditional territories and homelands including the Ring of Fire Region.

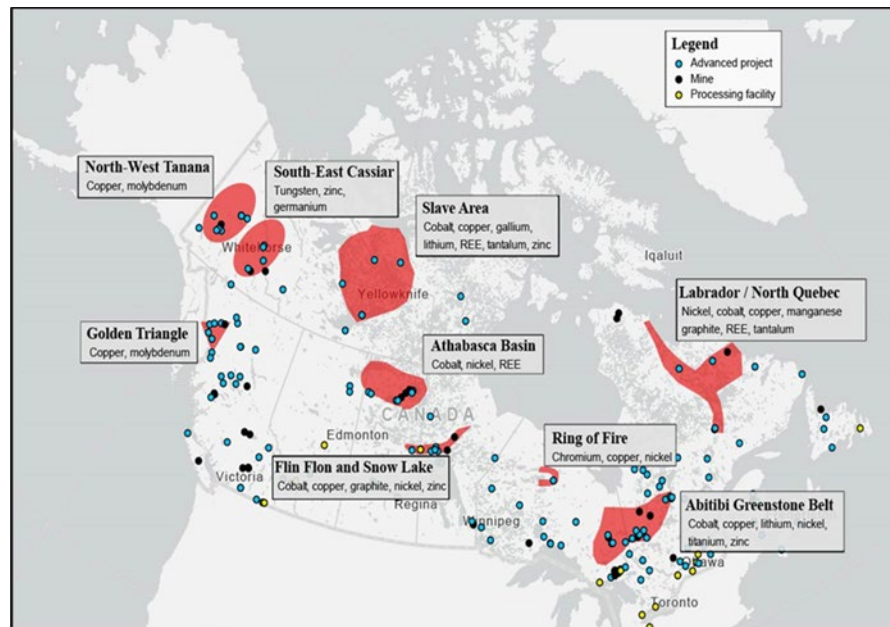
- The Province of Ontario has yet to make any substantive effort to communicate or include the meaningful participation of the Matawa member First Nations as a collective region, despite a very aggressive legislative and public agenda to access our traditional territories and homelands.

BACKGROUND ON MINING IN TREATY NO. 9 AND THE MATAWA REGION

Based on a review of the Ontario Geological Survey (OGS) Report of Activities 2021 across the districts of interest to Matawa member First Nations as a region, beneficiaries of Treaty No. 9 and members of Nishnawbe Aski Nation the following is true [Thunder Bay North, Thunder Bay South, Red Lake, Timmins, Kirkland Lake]:

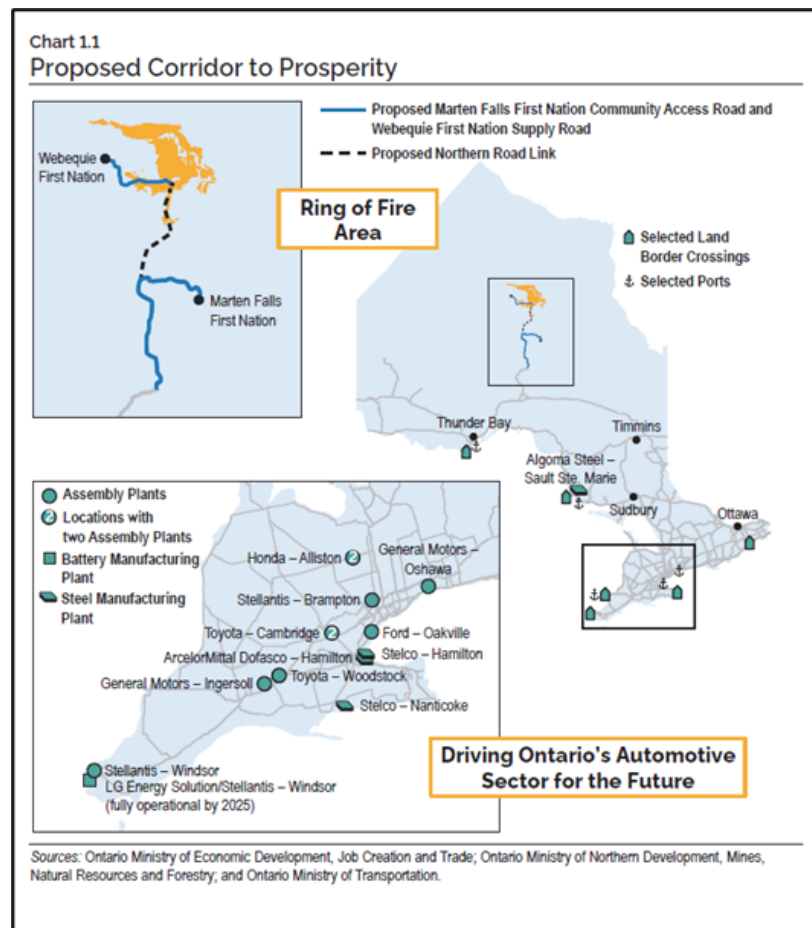
- The James Bay Treaty No. 9 territory currently supports **11 operating mines** and a **workforce of 7,832** direct employees or contractors.
- The recovery permit amendments will provide the mining industry access to an **estimated 295 closed mines across** the province of Ontario that may never have been part of the duty to consult process, and the source of historic environmental grievances and exclusion of First Nations revenue share interests.
- The James Bay Treaty No. 9 territory has identified **13 critical minerals** that are of specific interest to the governments of Ontario, Canada, USA, EU, Australia, UK, Japan, China and Korea.
- In terms of exploration across the Matawa region and the James Bay Treaty No. 9 territory - 118/188 sites are of interest to the Matawa Chiefs Council, and **51 sites** are critical minerals.

Map of Canada's Critical Minerals Rich Regions¹



¹ Canada's Critical Minerals Strategy: Discussion Paper Appendix D <https://www.canada.ca/en/campaign/critical-minerals-in-canada/canada-critical-minerals-strategy-discussion-paper.html#ad>

Map of Canada's Critical Minerals Rich Regions²



233 S. Court Street | Thunder Bay, ON P7B 2X9 | Tel: (807) 344-4575 | Fax: (807) 344-2977 | Toll Free: 1-800-463-2249
www.matawa.on.ca

² Ontario Budget 2022 – Ontario's Plan to Build <https://budget.ontario.ca/2022/pdf/2022-ontario-budget-en.pdf>