



## CHIEFS COUNCIL

The Honourable Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
Queens Park, Legislative Building  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1  
Email: [premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca)

Monday June 9, 2025

**RE: MATAWA CHIEFS COUNCIL RESPONSE TO PROTECT ONTARIO BY UNLEASHING  
OUR ECONOMY ACT, 2025**

Dear Premier Ford;

The Matawa Chiefs Council stands united in our deep concern over the Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act, 2025, introduced on June 4. This legislation was advanced without consultation and represents a dangerous precedent—one that disregards our rights, territories, and the principle of free, prior, and informed consent.

Many of our Nations are currently facing states of emergency due to wildfires, infrastructure failures, and chronic underfunding. Yet, amid these crises, your government is accelerating development agendas on our lands without our involvement. Bill 5's framework undermines the very foundation of respectful nation-to-nation relationships and Indigenous governance in Ontario.

We demand immediate engagement. The Matawa Chiefs Council requests a meeting with your office by Friday, June 13, 2025, to initiate a proper government-to-government process. These discussions must recognize our inherent and constitutionally protected rights, and ensure we are not sidelined from decisions that impact our homelands.

If no meeting is confirmed by the end of business day on June 13, 2025, the Matawa Chiefs Council will proceed with a unified response, including legal, political, and public actions, to ensure our voices are heard and our rights respected.

To coordinate next steps, please contact Paul Capon, Political Advisor to the Matawa Chiefs Council at [pcapon@matawa.on.ca](mailto:pcapon@matawa.on.ca) or 1-807-344-4575. We have attached our July 9, 2018, letter for context and reiteration of our longstanding positions.

We await your urgent response.

Sincerely,  
**MATAWA CHIEFS COUNCIL**

**CHIEFS CONSENSUS**

Attachments: Matawa Chiefs Council Letter to Premier Doug Ford – July 9, 2018  
Mamow-Wecheekapawetahteewiin Unity Declaration, 2011

c.c.            *Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, Nishnawbe Aski Nation*  
                  *Regional Chief Abram Benedict, Chiefs of Ontario*  
                  *National Chief Cindy Woodhouse-Nepinak, Assembly of First Nations*  
                  *Prime Minister of Canada The Right Honourable Mark Carney*  
                  *Premiers of Canada*





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Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Monday July 9, 2018

### RE: MATAWA CHIEFS COUNCIL

Dear Premier Ford;

The Matawa Chiefs Council extend our congratulations to you on your election to the Office of the Premier of Ontario. As you prepare to form the next government of Ontario, this letter is to initiate discussions with the Matawa Chiefs Council and our First Nation communities on how we may work together and potentially move forward in the development of the North.

The Matawa First Nations are unique; nine (9) First Nations encompassing remote and road access communities. Each First Nation has a community-based process in decision-making; and as such, the Matawa Chiefs Council has worked together to respect the community-based processes that involve elders and community members who in turn guide our Chief and Councils.

The Matawa Chiefs Council look forward to working with Ontario to ensure a meaningful, reasonable and a true partnership approach that will benefit our First Nations, government of Ontario and industry to create opportunities for sustainable community, economic and resource development. The Matawa Chiefs Council has also worked to ensure continued communication with government in a fair and respectful way.

It is the position of the Matawa Chiefs Council that there are processes in place that will assist in providing the supports and opportunities required for Matawa First Nations participation and joint-decision making with both senior levels of government represented by Canada and Ontario. We look forward to a renewed relationship of transparency, equality and mutual understanding.

We expect that you and your Ministers will have new ideas on how to move forward together. For the past two years the Matawa First Nations Chiefs have been asserting our jurisdiction in discussion with Ontario based on our Unity Declaration (see attached) and we will continue to do so with your new government as well. The Matawa Chiefs Council look forward to your response and a direct meeting in the coming weeks to come to a new understanding of how to engage on these important issues and opportunities. Please direct correspondence to Paul Capon, Policy Analyst – Matawa Chiefs Council at [pcapon@matawa.on.ca](mailto:pcapon@matawa.on.ca).





## CHIEFS COUNCIL

Sincerely,  
**MATAWA CHIEFS COUNCIL**

Chief Dorothy Towedo  
Aroland First Nation

Chief Rick Allen  
Constance Lake First Nation

Chief Elizabeth Atlookan  
Eabametoong First Nation

Chief Celia Echum  
Ginoogaming First Nation

Chief Veronica Waboose  
Long Lake #58 First Nation

Chief Wayne Moonias  
Neskantaga First Nation

Chief Bruce Achneepineskum  
Marten Falls First Nation

Chief Johnny Yellowhead  
Nibinamik First Nation

Chief Cornelius Wabasse  
Webequie First Nation

Attachment: *Mamow-Wecheekapawetahtewiin Unity Declaration, July 13 2011*







## CHIEFS COUNCIL

# Mamow- Wecheekapawetahteewiin

## LL° ·ΔΓΒ<·ΔCΠ·Δ° UNITY DECLARATION

We, the undersigned nine (9) First Nations; Aroland, Constance Lake, Eabametoong, Ginoogaming, Marten Falls, Long Lake #58, Neskantaga, Nibinamik and Webequie, live and rely upon the lands, water and resources entrusted to us by the Creator. We are connected through our language, culture, social and economic interests. The First Nations have the inherent right of self-determination as determined by our First Nations and applies to our homelands. This fundamental right has always rested with our people. The inherent right of self-determination is an Aboriginal and Treaty right recognized and affirmed under **Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982**. The nine (9) First Nations take the position that our traditional territories are under our control, and approval to operate in our respective territories cannot be given by the Government or any other entities. We are united in sharing a common vision of being self-sufficient, self-governing peoples within a healthy, thriving culture, living in our homelands that shall sustain us for all times.

We will do whatever is necessary in order to protect our land, our water and our resources for the future generations. We agree that we must stand together in order to ensure our nation is protected. Therefore, we assert our Aboriginal and Treaty rights to the land, water and resources by requiring our written consent before any development activity may proceed. Failure to consult, accommodate and receive the consent of the First Nation(s) to proceed with any work or activity is an unjustified infringement upon our Aboriginal, Treaty and Custodial rights as First Nations.

Dated in Webequie First Nation at the Matawa Chiefs Meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of July 2011.

X

Chief Cella Echum  
Ginoogaming First Nation

X

Chief Sonny Gagnon  
Aroland First Nation

X

Chief Elijah Moonias  
Marten Falls First Nation

X

Chief Peter Moonias  
Neskantaga First Nation

X

Chief Roger Oskineegish  
Nibinamik First Nation

X

Chief Harry Papah  
Eabametoong First Nation

X

Chief Cornelius Wabasse  
Webequie First Nation

X

Chief Roger Wesley  
Constance Lake First Nation

X

Chief Veronica Waboose  
Long Lake #58 First Nation

