



CHIEFS COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 26, 2026

MATAWA CHIEFS' COUNCIL: RING OF FIRE DEVELOPMENT MUST DELIVER ECONOMIC – POLITICAL – SOCIAL – COMMUNITY WELL-BEING RECONCILIATION

(Ottawa, ON) – Today, as leaders meet at the First Nations-First Ministers' Meeting, the Matawa Chiefs' Council is calling for a new approach to development in the Ring of Fire that places Indigenous rights, economic, political, social, community well-being reconciliation, and community readiness at the centre of decision-making.

While governments have highlighted the region's projected economic benefits, the Matawa Chiefs Council stress that the critical minerals located within Matawa territories will generate wealth for generations and must create lasting benefits for the First Nations' whose lands will make that development possible.

For more than a century, resources from James Bay Treaty No. 9 (1905-06 and 1929-30) territory have contributed to Ontario's economic growth, yet the Matawa communities continue to face significant infrastructure, housing, energy, and social challenges. The Matawa Chiefs' Council maintain that these longstanding gaps must be addressed alongside any major resource development.

The Matawa Chiefs' Council is calling on the Governments of Canada and Ontario to establish a dedicated Crown-Matawa leadership table that respects First Nation-led processes and supports meaningful participation in planning the future of the region.

"The Matawa member First Nations are not stakeholders in the Ring of Fire. We are the Inherent and Treaty rights holders where applicable. Any path forward must recognize our leadership, our priorities, and our role in shaping the future of our homelands. Respectful recognition of our First Nation governance and protocols as we are nine (9) distinct nations is an important principle to be advanced. These same principles must apply to other proposed development and infrastructure corridors, including the Northern Shield Energy Corridor, wherever they impact Matawa member First Nations' territories."



WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE FOLLOWING

- This statement and media release is without prejudice to any position Long Lake No. 58 First Nation takes or may take regarding its Treaty status or its Aboriginal rights and title.
- This statement and media release is without prejudice to the positions any of the Matawa member First Nations takes or may take on the issue of whether they are a party to any Treaty.
- This statement and media release is without prejudice to any present or future legal challenges or statements of claim by any Matawa member First Nations or the Matawa Chiefs Council. Matawa member First Nations are sovereign and autonomous Indigenous rights holders. Through their leadership, they guide the work and strategic direction of the Matawa Chiefs Council and Matawa First Nations.

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