



## CHIEFS COUNCIL

### MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, January 16, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## MATAWA CHIEFS COUNCIL CHALLENGE PREMIER FORD'S INDICATIONS OF FIRST NATIONS CONSENT ON THE AM-CAN FORTRESS STRATEGY - "OUR LAND IS NOT FOR SALE"

**THUNDER BAY, ON:** From January 14 to 16, 2025, the Matawa Chiefs Council (MCC) met to engage in broad decision making on collective issues. The MCC had an opportunity to review Ontario Premier Ford's recent daily announcements on Ontario's proposed Fortress Am-Can with respect to critical minerals that will impact the homelands of the Matawa member First Nations. The Matawa Chiefs Council conclude that the Premier's strategy is absent of any participation, input or engagement with the impacted communities. They released the following statement today:

*"Since Ontario Premier Ford has taken office in 2018, First Nations in Matawa have attempted to formally establish a working relationship with the Ontario government on a meaningful approach to advancing our relationships for the development of the North including the proposed Ring of Fire. As Inherent, Treaty and Aboriginal rights holders—we continue to hold the position that the province of Ontario's authority to grant access to critical minerals in the Ring of Fire region within our traditional homelands is precarious. Our First Nations have protocols on access to our lands that need to be followed.*

*Ontario public interest and reconciliation requires progressive leadership at the Premier and Ministerial levels. As such, the MCC urges caution to the Ontario public relying on one-sided views held by the Ontario government related to the rights and interests of the Matawa region. The Matawa Chiefs Council call on the Premier of Ontario to reconsider the colonial approach underway and to meet with us collectively as a matter of priority. It is unfortunate that other First Nations like Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation are facing similar difficulties in their relationship with their premier (Alberta Premier Danielle Smith)—the MCC stands behind Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation in their position that their land is not for sale."*

### OTHER COMMENTS:

Additionally, the Am-Can strategy (and the rhetoric around Ontario having secured Indigenous rights holders consent to the resources required for the critical minerals supply chain) lacks consideration of:



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1. [\\$95 billion claim](#) against Canada and Ontario by the Attawapiskat First Nation, Apitipi Anicinapek Nation, Aroland, Constance Lake, Eabametoong, Fort Albany, Ginoogaming, Kashechewan, Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwig and Neskantaga First Nations launched in April 2023
2. The [claim challenging the province's Mining Act](#) in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, arguing it is unconstitutional and overrides Treaty and Charter equality rights. The leaders of Apitipi Anicinapek Nation, Aroland, Attawapiskat, Fort Albany, Ginoogaming First Nations and , Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwig filed a notice of application with the court on Aug. 9, 2023
3. The [regional assessment in the ring of fire area](#) which is a co-led federal government/First Nations study that is in process (starting in 2023) and that is yet to conclude. It will inform planning and management of cumulative effects of this proposed development
4. Matawa members First Nations have been economically excluded from the province of Ontario's Resource Revenue Sharing Agreements that were first signed into 2018 with other Ontario First Nation regions

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***For more information, please contact Matawa Communications by email at [comms@matawa.on.ca](mailto:comms@matawa.on.ca).***

