



ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS BULLETIN ASSEMBLÉE DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS

473, RUE ALBERT STREET
9th FLOOR / 9^e ÉTAGE
OTTAWA ON K1R 5B4

(613) 241-6789 telephone / téléphone (613) 241-5808 fax / télécopieur

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Assembly of First Nations National Chief Supports Matawa First Nations

(Ottawa, ON) –Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo today continued to urge the Ontario and federal governments to fulfill their obligation to fully engage and consult with First Nations prior to development.

“Just as I stood with Matawa First Nations at a press conference last November, I stand in full support of all First Nations asserting their rights and in favour of the implementation of free, prior and informed consent as a basic standard when it comes to development,” said AFN National Chief Shawn Atleo. “Development opportunities must not come at a cost to First Nation Treaty and rights. First Nation leaders must be fully engaged in any development in their territories so they can drive the solutions that will grow the communities where their peoples can learn, work and grow. True partnership is about supporting one another and investing in peoples and communities, and it must be the way forward. Governments and industry must engage early and engage often. This is the bare minimum and I urge both Ontario and Canada to act now.”

Six First Nation communities part of Matawa Tribal Council announced June 22 they would be issuing a 30 day eviction notice to all mining companies with exploration and development camps in their territories. The eviction notice also called for a moratorium on all Ring of Fire mining activity.

First Nations within Matawa territory, and those surrounding, including Mushkegowuk First Nations and other Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities have stated clearly they are not opposed to development, rather that development must be sustainable and responsible and undergo appropriate environmental assessment which includes meaningful First Nation participation, consultation, accommodation and consent.

The Ring of Fire is an area situated in First Nation territories around McFaulds Lake in Northern Ontario with resource development prospects that have the potential to drive the Ontario and Canadian economy for decades. Several First Nation communities will be impacted by development in the area or by the associated infrastructure. A number of First Nations are concerned that by the way the Ring of Fire projects are proceeding there will be damage to the lands and river systems, changing their ways of life with no tangible benefits to their communities already facing the challenges of inadequate housing, health care and education.

The Assembly of First Nations is the national organization representing First Nations citizens in Canada. Follow us on Twitter @AFN_Updates and @AFN_Comms.

For more information please contact:

Jenna Young AFN Communications Officer 613-241-6789, ext 401; 613-314-8157 or
jyoung@afn.ca

Alain Garon AFN Bilingual Communications Officer 613-241-6789, ext 382; 613-292-0857 or
agaron@afn.ca