

# MUSHKEGOWUK COUNCIL

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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Mushkegowuk threaten on site action at the Ring of Fire if voice is not heard/Support Matawa First Nations call for moratorium**

Attawapiskat  
First Nation

Kashechewan  
First Nation

Fort Albany  
First Nation

Moose Cree  
First Nation

Taykwa Tagamou  
Nation

Chapleau Cree  
First Nation

Missanabie Cree  
First Nation

OMUSHKEGO ASKI, June 28, 2012; The Mushkegowuk First Nations and the Matawa First Nations continue to stand together on common issues affecting the homelands and waters of their respective First Nations. In September 2011, the Matawa First Nations and the Mushkegowuk First Nations signed a historic Joint Declaration signifying their joint interest and collaboration on behalf of their homelands.

On June 22, 2012, six Matawa First Nations issued a news release stating that a 30 day eviction notice would be given to all mining companies with exploration and development camps in the homelands of the Matawa First Nations. The eviction notice will also call for a moratorium on all Ring of Fire mining activity.

“We continue to dialogue with the Matawa First Nations, Ontario and Canada and the mining companies on the Ring of Fire and we too are very frustrated with how the project is being aggressively advanced with little or no regard for First Nations rights and jurisdictions,” stated Grand Chief Stan Louttit. “We asked for a Joint Panel for the EA process and they didn’t listen to us; we asked for a ferrochrome facility in our territory and they didn’t listen to us; we asked for capacity for funding to be meaningfully involved in the EA process and they still have not responded to us; we asked for agreements with Noront and Cliffs that would deal with our issues in an agreement and they are not listening to us; we have asked that our Treaty Rights be respected and they are ignoring us” continued the Grand Chief.

Ontario has gone on record stating that the ROF will be one the largest resource development activities in the province in a century and will generate millions and millions of dollars for the governments and the economy of Ontario. The First Nations have gone on record as well stating that they do not oppose development. What they want is to be included in the formula for revenue sharing as with Canada and Ontario. Meanwhile, the resource development companies and governments are satisfied with small Impact Benefit Agreements that promise small employment and other benefits to the

community, but usually don't deliver. "These agreements are a small first step but we need to move beyond IBA's" stated Chief Theresa Spence of the

Attawapiskat First Nation. "We are in poverty, our housing situation is in a crisis. We have received government program funding for 60 years and we are still in poverty. What we need is true revenue sharing, royalty sharing that will make a difference in our communities. We want decent houses, we want proper roads, we want effective schools, we want what any other city or town in Ontario and Canada already has" continued Chief Spence. "We will never get out of the poverty that we are in with a few small IBA's, employment agreements that don't work, training contracts that promise but don't deliver. We demand a fair and proper share of the wealth being generated from our land."

The Ring of Fire is an area exceedingly rich in minerals and precious metals situated in First Nation homelands in what is referred to as the James Bay Lowlands north of Thunder Bay, Ontario. Several First Nations in the immediate area, as well as those downriver on the Attawapiskat and Albany Rivers will be impacted by this development and associated infrastructure, such as roads, railway and bridges. The James Bay Lowlands contain the largest collection of intact wetlands in Canada have has been home to the Crees and Ojibways in far northern Ontario for a thousand years. "This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for all of us and we have to get it right" stated Chief Jonathon Solomon of the Kashechewan First Nation. "There is an opportunity here for everyone including Ontario, the mining companies and the First Nations. The stakes are too high to mess it up or to leave us out again. Let's get it right the first time" continued Chief Solomon.

"Canada, Ontario and the resource development sector fail to recognize the powers and authorities of the First Nations. These powers and authorities come from the lands and waters provided to us by our Creator and we will someday be forced to fully exercise our given authority, jurisdiction and powers over our lands and waters" says Chief Andrew Solomon of the Fort Albany First Nation. "We don't expect government and the resource sector to know what I am talking about because they think they own all of this land and waters. But the records and diaries of the James Bay Treaty of 1905/06 clearly contradict the government position on the lands in far Northern Ontario" continued Chief Solomon. "It needs to be understood that Inherent Rights predate the Treaty. These rights come from the Creator and we have never relinquished those rights" concluded Chief Solomon.

The Mushkegowuk Chiefs are calling upon all Indigenous Nations, organizations, NGO's, citizens etc to provide support and action that will compel the governments of Ontario and Canada to provide greater assurances that will fully protect the James Bay Lowlands from any contamination or damage from the Ring of Fire development including changing and

implementing government legislation and policy that will build healthier communities and creates strong long term economies in the far north.

The Mushkegowuk Chiefs stand united in their position on the Ring of Fire and the actions taken by the 6 Matawa First Nations. “We are ready to stand with our brothers and sisters to be heard” declared Grand Chief Louttit. “We have tried but no one has listened. It unfortunate indeed that we have to resort to this type of action. We would much rather work in partnership with government, Noront and Cliffs on discussions about revenue sharing, royalties and the sustainable development of our territories. If we have to literally go to the site, we will, maybe then they will listen and take us seriously.”

***Grand Chief Stan Louttit***

Mushkegowuk Council is a regional organization that represents the collective interests of the Kashechewan, Fort Albany, Chapleau Cree, Missanabie Cree, Moose Cree, Taykwa Tagamou and Attawapiskat First Nations in northeastern Ontario.

For more information on the contents of this media release, you may contact the office of the Grand Chief by phone 705-658-4222 or by email [stanlouttit@mushkegowuk.ca](mailto:stanlouttit@mushkegowuk.ca)