



# Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association

Kenora, Rainy River and Thunder Bay Districts

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ISSUES AT FOREFRONT DURING PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE**

THUNDER BAY – Representatives of the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) attended the Ontario Good Roads Association/Rural Ontario Municipal Association conference in Toronto last week. Northwestern Ontario's attendance at the conference was strong with over 36 elected representatives from 18 municipalities participating to present their issues to Government Ministers.

During the conference, Board members met with Hon. Michael Gravelle, Minister of Northern Development, Mines & Forestry, Hon. Jim Bradley, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Hon. Linda Jeffrey, Minister of Natural Resources, and Hon. Deb Matthews, Minister of Health to discuss NOMA's response to the Proposed Growth Plan for Northern Ontario and the many serious issues facing Northwestern Ontario municipalities including:

- Our economic situation and its social impacts;
- Request for an increase in the Northern Communities Grant;
- The need for an affordable, long-term industrial energy rate;
- A call for additional environmental assessment officers to reduce application processing delays and for Provincial geo-science mapping;
- The importance of Government support to ensure mining opportunities are realized;
- Forest tenure and the need for a law that establishes 26 million cubic metres of available fibre on a sustained basis;
- Non-urgent Patient Transportation challenges;
- Support for establishment of a Northern Growth Secretariat and a Northern Ontario Public Policy Institute;
- Creation of a new MaRS North Discovery District for R&D; and,
- The need to establish Northwestern Offices for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and the Ministry of Economic Development & Trade.

Board members also held meetings with Tim Hudak, Leader of the Official Opposition, and Andrea Horwath, Leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party.

President Anne Krassilowsky commented, "NOMA appreciates the opportunity to sit down with our Provincial leaders to explain the challenges we face and provide some solutions to these challenges. We are encouraged by the positive response received from the Ministers and we will continue to remind them of the needs of Northwestern communities."

In addition, during the Minister's Forum session, NOMA representatives posed questions regarding Energy Pricing, Bill 237, the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, and Green Energy Opportunities to the panel of over a dozen Ministers.

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