

Feb 18, 2020

### **FEDS SEEK OSGOODE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & SUSTAINABILITY CLINIC'S HELP IN RING OF FIRE**

York University – Feb 12

In what is being described as “a stunning success,” Osgoode Hall Law School’s Environmental Justice and Sustainability Clinic has received word from the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change that its request for a regional impact assessment for proposed mining and road infrastructure in Ontario’s Ring of Fire has been accepted. Minister Jonathan Wilkinson granted the clinic’s request, with reasons, in a Feb. 10 letter addressed to clinic co-director, Professor Dayna Scott. He stated that the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada has been instructed to meet with the clinic in order to shape the terms of reference for the regional assessment.

<https://yfile.news.yorku.ca/2020/02/12/feds-seek-osgoode-environmental-justice-sustainability-clinics-help-in-ring-of-fire/>

### **CHROMIUM, NICKEL: LONG-TERM PLAN FOR THE RING OF FIRE**

Roskill – Feb 13

Progress on developing minerals in Canada’s Ring of Fire has been slow, mainly because of the need to establish access infrastructure to encourage exploration and exploitation in the remote region. In order to open up access to potential resources, a five- to ten-year construction plan is in place to build an all-season gravel road in collaboration with First Nation communities. Advances on completion of the road are expected to gain traction over the 2020s, as the USA and Canada collaborate to address critical raw material supply chains. One company exploring the Ring of Fire is Noront Resources, which is targeting several resources. The company plans to develop its nickel Eagle’s Nest project first, which has the potential to attract investment from the electric vehicle (EV) industry for lithium-ion battery raw materials. Following on from nickel, Noront plans to focus on large chromium resources already identified in the Ring of Fire.

<https://roskill.com/news/chromium-nickel-long-term-plan-for-the-ring-of-fire/>

### **OTTAWA STEPS INTO ‘RING OF FIRE’ DEBATE WITH DOUG FORD**

The Conversation – Feb 17 (co-authored by David Peerla, advisor to Neskantaga First Nation)

The struggle over the mineral deposits in Ontario’s Ring of Fire has taken a surprising turn. With all eyes on British Columbia as events unfold in Unist’ot’en, the federal minister of environment and climate change has said the agency will establish a major regional assessment process for the Ring of Fire. Those who support the development of the Ring of Fire will undoubtedly cast the federal decision as meddling by environmentalists and a disaffected First Nation. We see it as Canada finally stepping into the ring with Ontario Premier Doug Ford to restore some integrity to the environmental assessment process. Last fall, Neskantaga First Nation, a community with whom I have an ongoing research relationship, engaged Osgoode Hall Law School’s Environmental Justice and Sustainability Clinic to assist with their participation in the environmental assessment process for the proposed roads. When it became clear the current provincial regime couldn’t accommodate their concerns about the cumulative impacts of all the development, the Osgoode clinic wrote to the federal minister and requested he exercise a new discretionary power to establish a regional assessment under the contested Impact Assessment Act. The regional assessment is also an opportunity to return to the path recommended by Matawa and the downstream Mushkegowuk First Nations in 2011, which empowers Indigenous authorities to exercise control over the decisions that will impact them the most. It offers a path to meaningful participation, consent and real reconciliation.

<https://theconversation.com/ottawa-steps-into-ring-of-fire-debate-with-doug-ford-131818>

### **THE QUÉBEC GOVERNMENT AND THE CREE NATION SIGN A GRAND ALLIANCE - THE QUÉBEC GOVERNMENT AND THE CREE NATION WILL COLLABORATE TO CARRY OUT AN AMBITIOUS INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN IN THE EYYOU ISTCHEE JAMES BAY TERRITORY**

Cision – Feb 17

The Québec Premier François Legault and Grand Chief of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and Chairman of the Cree Nation Government, Dr. Abel Bosum, officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding on collaborative, long-term, balanced economic development in a spirit of respect for Cree values in the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Territory. The Government and the Cree Nation will collaborate to carry out an ambitious infrastructure plan in the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Territory. The project stems from a patient consultative process with the Cree communities and calls for: the extension of the rail network to promote economic development and reduce the impacts of trucking; the electrification of certain industrial projects; the sharing of infrastructure in the territory; local labour force training; the identification of new protected areas conducive to the connectivity of the territory's wildlife habitats.

It is anticipated that the plan will extend over a period of 30 years to ensure the predictability and stability of the economic and social development of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Territory and Québec overall.

<https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/the-quebec-government-and-the-cree-nation-sign-a-grand-alliance-the-quebec-government-and-the-cree-nation-will-collaborate-to-carry-out-an-ambitious-infrastructure-plan-in-the-eeyou-istchee-james-bay-territory-806389151.html>

### **CREE VISION OF DEVELOPMENT BEHIND \$4.7B AGREEMENT WITH QUEBEC**

CBC News – Feb 17

The deal will be implemented over 30 years in three phases.

"We are here today not to make a sacrifice or surrender. Today is not part of some concession or a difficult compromise. We are not forced to be here as part of a settlement," said Bosum. "The vision came from us, the Cree of Eeyou Istchee." Bosum and Quebec Premier François Legault signed a memorandum of understanding Monday, and will collaborate over the next 12 months to carry out a multi-million dollar feasibility study, jointly funded by the Cree, Quebec and federal governments. The plan also includes the electrification of some industrial projects and training of the local labour force. The deal identifies large parts of the territory, which have been identified by the Cree as environmentally and culturally important to them, for protection. In 2018, the Cree identified 30 per cent of its territory that it would like to see protected. "The thing that's really unique [in the Grande Alliance] is the fact that the priority of the Cree Nation to protect is incorporated in Quebec's desire to develop," said Cree Deputy Grand Chief Mandy Gull, who is responsible for the protected areas file for the Cree Nation Government. The project is the result of more than a year of discussions between the Cree Nation Government and the Cree community chiefs, most of whom were on hand for Monday's announcement.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/cree-development-quebec-abel-bosum-françois-legault-grande-alliance-1.5466612>

### **QUEBEC, JAMES BAY CREE ANNOUNCE \$4.7-BILLION DEVELOPMENT DEAL**

Montreal Gazette – Feb 17

Legault says the project will have twofold affect in curtailing greenhouse gas emissions. An extended rail network means diesel trucks are virtually taken out of the equation. And the fact that they're carrying lithium — used in batteries that fuel electric cars — will also have an impact in fighting climate change.

The Cree and Quebec government will split the cost of studying the new railroad — which Legault said will cost "in the tens of millions of dollars." The plan also includes hundreds of kilometres of power lines and roads linking remote Cree villages to the outside world and the construction of a deep sea port in James Bay.

<https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/quebec-james-bay-cree-announce-4-7-billion-development-deal>