



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SOME GOOD NEWS FOR NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO

"Some good support for the North", was the statement from the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce (NOACC). "We commend this government for proceeding with a new project to widen Highway 11/17 east of Thunder Bay. This has been a lobbying issue with NOACC and the Province of Ontario for several years and we are pleased that the expansion of this highway will now be a reality," stated Barry Streib, President of NOACC. "Transportation infrastructure is critical to the success of business in Northern Ontario. In addition to the widening of Highway 11/17 to Nipigon, this government has also committed resources to remote airports and the winter road network. This will connect us with our remote communities and strengthen the North," added Streib.

This Budget also announced immediate steps to extend the rebates of 1.8 cents per kilowatt-hour to qualifying mills. "Although I was pleased with having this issue addressed and the rebates extended, we need to have a permanent competitive energy rate for our large industrial users. It is critical for the future of both forestry and mining. Forestry in particular needs to know the future of the energy costs and it must be competitive", stated Mary Long-Irwin, Chief Operating Officer, NOACC. "We will continue to work with the province to ensure that we have a future in forestry right here in the North."

"I was very pleased to see that this government also committed to introduce changes to the Mining Act this spring. This will support a vibrant Ontario minerals industry and benefit all of us," stated Streib. "The proposed legislative changes work to establish a framework that would make significant strides in Aboriginal partnership and consultation. The government is providing \$40 million over three years for initiatives to support *Mining Act* modernization. I believe Mining in Northwestern Ontario will contribute to the growth of our economy within our communities and to that end NOACC is very pleased to see that support," added Streib.

"We look forward to working with Minister Gravelle and the Province to move forward the Grow North Plan, to ensure many of the recommendations in the Rosehart Report are also included and provide support for the Common Voice Initiative" concluded Long-Irwin.

The Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce (NOACC) is the active Voice of Business in Northwestern Ontario, representing Chambers throughout 22 communities in Northwestern Ontario.

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