

## Ontario Premier Wynne Mandates Aboriginal Priorities

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*Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne released mandate letters to her cabinet ministers on September 25, 2014, outlining key priorities for each ministry. Premier Wynne's marching orders include many Aboriginal priorities.*

*Key Aboriginal priorities connected to environmental, energy and natural resource issues relate to socio-economic opportunities, sharing resource benefits, negotiations in the Ring of Fire, land claims, treaty and consultation issues, drinking water quality and dialogue with the federal government. Notable among the Premier's Aboriginal priorities is the movement towards developing a coherent policy for improving drinking water quality and plans to develop mining interests in northern Ontario.*

### Energy Projects and Programs

- ◆ **Remote Transmission Projects** – The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs (MAA) will create an Aboriginal Economic Development Fund for Aboriginal communities and businesses to improve opportunities for employment and business development. Specifically, MAA will partner with the Minister of Energy (ME) to create the Remote Electrification Readiness Program. This will position Aboriginal communities to benefit from remote transmission projects.
- ◆ **Participation in Energy Projects** – ME will continue to consult with First Nations about energy projects that could adversely affect their Aboriginal or treaty rights. ME will continue to support First Nations participation in generation and transmission projects through programs such as the Aboriginal Energy Partnerships Program. ME will seek funding and cooperation from the federal government and MAA to connect Aboriginal communities to the electricity grid.
- ◆ **Community-Level Energy Planning** – ME will support First Nations community-level energy plans through the Municipal Energy Plan Program and the Aboriginal Community Energy Plans Program.

### Natural Resource Development

- ◆ **Sharing Resource Benefits** – MAA will work across government to ensure that Aboriginal communities are engaged in resource-related economic development and will benefit from the natural resource industry. MAA is tasked with advancing the province's local and/or sectoral approach to sharing resource benefits.
- ◆ **Ring of Fire Negotiations** – MAA and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines (MNDM) will continue to negotiate with Aboriginal communities on the Ring of Fire

Framework Agreement. MNDM will establish a Ring of Fire development corporation to bring together private and public partners – including key mining companies and First Nations. The corporation will be responsible for constructing, financing, operating and maintaining infrastructure to support access to strategic resources in the Ring of Fire. MNDM will continue to work with partners on the Ring of Fire Regional Framework Agreement.

- ♦ **Aggregate and Forest Resources** – The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) will engage with First Nations to address the recommendations of the Standing Committee on General Government’s Report on the Review of the *Aggregate Resources Act*. MNRF will continue to engage with First Nations on forest resources.

### **Land Claims, Treaties and Consultation**

- ♦ **Moving Forward on Land Claims and Treaties** – MAA will continue to negotiate land claims, including moving forward from the Algonquin Agreement-in-Principle. MAA will move forward with a new Treaty Strategy to build better relationships with Aboriginal peoples.
- ♦ **Fulfilling the Duty to Consult** – MAA will continue to work with all ministries to fulfill Ontario’s duty to consult.
- ♦ **Northern Priorities and the Growth Plan for Ontario** – MNDM will continue to consult with First Nations on the priorities for the North and the Growth Plan for Ontario.

### **Drinking Water Quality**

- ♦ **Improving Drinking Water for First Nations** – MAA will work with the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC), the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (MIGA) and the federal government to improve drinking water on reserves, especially remote communities.

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