Ring of Fire Secretariat Provides Update on Infrastructure Development

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In late August 2014, the Ontario government established the Ring of Fire Infrastructure Development Corporation (the Corporation). The Corporation's purpose is to advise on critical infrastructure investment decisions for the Ring of Fire region in northern Ontario. The Natural Resources and Energy Law section of the Ontario Bar Association (OBA) reached out to the Ring of Fire Secretariat for an update after the establishment of the Corporation.

While interest in the Ring of Fire continues to be strong, numerous questions persist. Will infrastructure will be road or rail? Where will infrastructure be located? What will be the impacts of infrastructure and mining on the natural environment and the role of First Nation communities?

On November 5, 2014, I co-chaired an update to the OBA from Blaine Bouchard, senior advisor with the Ring of Fire Secretariat of the Ontario Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. Mr. Bouchard discussed progress in developing the Ring of Fire, actions taken by the government and the anticipated role of the Corporation.

The Corporation is still in its early stages, but it appears that the Ministry has high goals. We learned that the Corporation will have a Board of Directors comprised of stakeholders in the Ring of Fire, including the companies with interest in developing the mining opportunities, neighbouring communities and First Nations.

It was also clear that the development corporation has a long road, or rail, ahead of it.

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