



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Support Builds for New Deal to Revitalize Ontario Northland, Connect Ring of Fire

- *More stakeholders demand government pause its ONTC sell-off plan*
- *New website launches today to support the New Deal*

NORTH BAY, ONTARIO (Dec. 17, 2012) – The New Deal for Northern Ontario ([www.newdealnorth.ca](http://www.newdealnorth.ca)), an initiative to revitalize the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC), build a rail link to the Ring of Fire and create thousands of new jobs, has expanded its base of support among key stakeholders.

Liberal leadership candidate Harinder Takhar recently issued a policy statement calling for “Divestiture of the ONTC to an independent, self-sustaining organization, and the development of a new rail line for the ‘Ring of Fire’ operations.”

Takhar’s statement is closely aligned with the New Deal plan to transfer ownership of provincially-held ONTC’s railroad and other assets to a new ports authority to be operated under the Canada Marine Act. ONTC operations will be strengthened, and a new rail line to the Ring of Fire mineral deposits will be developed to ship chromite, nickel and other minerals and finished products to markets around the world.

MPP Glen Murray, another Liberal leadership candidate, has called on the government to “pause” its plan to divest the ONTC, while Gerard Kennedy is seeking a “review” of the sell-off decision and further examination of ONTC’s potential role in developing the Ring of Fire mineral deposits. Candidate Charles Sousa, meanwhile, supports “a sustainable, reliable ONTC that connects the North and supports jobs.”

A growing number of Northern Ontario municipalities have also spoken up either directly in support of the New Deal or for a pause in the sell-off. This includes North Bay City Council, which unanimously passed a resolution that “strongly supports the New Deal for (ONTC) and encourages all levels of government and other stakeholders to work cooperatively to ensure it is implemented expeditiously and successfully.”

The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) has spearheaded recent resolutions by at least 18 Northern Ontario municipalities urging the provincial government to “immediately suspend plans to divest from ONTC and to consult with local municipalities, stakeholders and regional economic development organizations regarding the long-term plans for improving the effectiveness of ONTC as a government asset.”

These include the municipalities of McDougall, Nipissing, Bonfield, Chisholm, Carling, Kearney, Armour, Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional, Kapuskasing, Timmins, Ryerson, Powassan, Charlton and Dack, Opasitaka, Seguin, Joly, and Temiskaming Shores. In addition, the Town of Huntsville and District of Muskoka passed resolutions calling on the government to reinstate the Northlander passenger train service.

Previously, the New Deal has received the unanimous endorsement of unionized ONTC employees and retirees, and support from First Nations communities, Nipissing-Timiskaming MP Jay Aspin, and mining and other business interests.

“We are delighted that more organizations and individuals recognize the New Deal’s benefits to a wide array of interests and to all of Northern Ontario,” said Roy Hains, CEO, the James Bay & Lowlands Ports Trustee Corporation.

### **New Website Launches Today**

A new website focusing exclusively on the New Deal – [www.newdealnorth.ca](http://www.newdealnorth.ca) – was launched today. The website provides background information on the initiative, updates, news coverage, maps and other information. The New Deal’s online presence now extends to the website, a mobile site, Facebook and Twitter.

### **About the New Deal for Northern Ontario**

The New Deal for Northern Ontario seeks to revitalize the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC) while creating significant economic opportunities and thousands of new jobs in the province’s North. The plan, which enjoys broad and growing stakeholder support, will preserve transportation services and hundreds of existing jobs, and provide access to the massive Ring of Fire mineral deposits. Ownership of ONTC’s railroad and other assets will be transferred from the provincial government to a new ports authority. The New Deal was developed in response to the Ontario government’s March 23, 2012 decision to divest the ONTC. Ontario Northland employs more than 950 workers and supports over 1100 pensioners in Northeastern Ontario, and has an estimated annual economic impact of almost \$210 million in the region. More information on the New Deal is available at [www.newdealnorth.ca](http://www.newdealnorth.ca).

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