



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**New Deal to Revitalize Ontario Northland, Connect Ring of Fire Receives
Unanimous Employee Support**

Plan will create economic opportunities and thousands of new jobs in Ontario's North

NORTH BAY, ONTARIO (October 22, 2012) – The General Chairperson's Association (GCA), representing employees of Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC), today announced that their members have voiced unanimous support for the proposed New Deal to revitalize ONTC.

About 530 current employees along with a number of retirees attended weekend meetings in North Bay, Timmins, Cochrane and Englehart to learn more about the New Deal from GCA representatives, following its public announcement on Friday.

The GCA-led plan calls for transferring 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 will be developed to ship chromite, nickel and other minerals and finished products to markets around the world.

"We are more energized than ever about the New Deal after receiving such enthusiastic support from our members," said GCA representative Brian Stevens. "Their voices build on strong support from a growing list of key stakeholders, adding to our confidence in the plan's success."

Other stakeholders actively supporting the New Deal include First Nations communities, Nipissing-Timiskaming MP Jay Aspin, Northern Ontario communities, and mining and other business interests.

ONTC employees were told at the weekend meetings that the potential costs to the provincial government in severance and benefits will be a convincing reason for them to join other stakeholders in advancing the New Deal.

"Our proposal offers clear benefits to the Province beyond avoiding costs associated with divesting ONTC," Stevens remarked. "This is an exciting opportunity for the government to save transportation services and hundreds of existing jobs in the North while also creating thousands more jobs by providing access to the Ring of Fire."

The GCA has invited Ministers Bartolucci and Chiarelli to discuss the New Deal at their earliest opportunity.

The plan was developed in response to the Ontario government's March 23, 2012 decision to divest the ONTC, which was followed by the shutdown of ONTC's Northlander passenger train service on September 28, 2012.

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.

About the General Chairperson's Association

The General Chairperson's Association (GCA) represents the interests of the unionized employees and their families at Ontario Northland. We are proud of the work we do and proud of the significant contributions our members make to the value of ONTC and for the overall growth of Northern Ontario. Our members include the Steelworkers Union (Local 1976 Lodges 1826/2008), Teamsters Canada Rail Conference (Division 910), International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (Local 2061), CAW Canada (Local 103) and Teamsters Canada Rail Conference Maintenance of Way Employees (Division Lodges 2697/003). For more information, visit www.developingthenorth.com.

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