The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau Prime Minister justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson Minister of Environment and Climate Change ec.ministre-minister.ec@canada.ca

The Honourable Doug Ford Premier of Ontario premier@ontario.ca

The Honourable Jeff Yurek
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
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February 24, 2021

CALL FOR A MORATORIUM IN THE RING OF FIRE TO PROTECT WATERSHEDS AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

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We, the undersigned environmental, Indigenous, and civil society organizations call on the governments of Canada and Ontario to establish an immediate moratorium in the Ring of Fire for all mineral exploration, assessments for proposed road projects, and other potential developments including the Northern Road link. It is critical the moratorium remain in effect until:

- 1. Protection plans for the region's sensitive wetlands and watersheds are in place, and
- 2. Pr P  $\Delta$ C-b'  $\sigma$ A'  $\nabla$ <4b' · $\triangleleft$ ^b $\Delta$ b $\sigma$ ' $_x$   $\Gamma_{\Delta}$ ALN-l $\Delta$   $\triangleleft$ D^9· $\Delta$  $\sigma$  $\sigma$ ° b  $\triangleleft$ D^bCr'  $\triangleleft$ Go' PPArC- $\triangleleft$ '  $\Gamma$ 2· $\nabla$  <sup>2</sup>NF'  $\neg$ 9°C LF'  $\Delta$ U9 2A' b  $\Delta$ 5  $\Delta$ C-b $\sigma$  $\sigma$ ° 1 $\Delta$ 9· $\Delta$ 4</br/>  $\triangleleft$ 1 < $\triangleleft$ 5° b  $\Delta$ 1bU $\sigma$ 1 $_x$
- 2. Access to clean water, housing, and health services have been secured for all upstream and downstream communities from the proposed Ring of Fire

This call to action is in support of the <u>request</u> by Mushkegowuk Council and Neskantaga First Nation of Treaty 9 that a moratorium be put in place until a proper protection plan is implemented. As requested, a protection plan must be comprehensive, based on best available science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and reflect the global significance of the carbon rich Hudson Bay-James Bay Lowland, including the Attawapiskat, Kapiskau, Albany, Ekwan, Opinnagau and Winisk Rivers and the thousands of streams that flow into Hudson Bay and James Bay.

We call on Canada and Ontario to honour and protect inherent Indigenous and treaty rights, and to take immediate actions to address the urgent health, housing, and water crises facing communities. Mining interests cannot continue to be prioritized over the health, lands, and natural laws of Indigenous communities.

Living up to the promise of reconciliation means action is required now to prevent further violations of Indigenous rights. To fulfill this duty, we call on Canada and Ontario to enact a moratorium to sustain the lands and waters that, since time immemorial, have been relied upon by region's First Nations.

The ancient peatlands of this region continue to serve as significant carbon sinks and have been cooling the whole earth for millennia. An immediate moratorium safeguards one of the few remaining intact boreal peatlands and protects both us and the generations that follow.

### Sincerely,



# east coast environmental law

#### **Canadian Environmental Law Association**

Theresa McClenaghan, Executive Director & Legal Counsel

## **East Coast Environmental Law**Lisa Mitchell, Executive Director & Senior



## Friends of the Attawapiskat River

Mike Koostachin, Director



## **Mining Injustice Solidary Network**

Kate Klein, Organizer

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## MiningWatch Canada

Jamie Kneen, Co-Manager

#### **Northwatch**

Brennain Lloyd, Project Coordinator



## Ontarians for a Just Accountable Mineral Strategy

Joan Kuyek, Chair

### Sierra Club Canada Foundation

Gretchen Fitzgerald, National Programs Director



West Coast Environmental Law

Anna Johnston, Staff Lawyer



Wildlands League

Anna Baggio, Conservation Director



Omushkegowuk Women's Water Council

Jennifer Wabano, Head



#### World Wildlife Fund Canada

Megan Leslie, President & CEO

cc. Grand Chief Jonathan Solomon, Mushkegowuk Council

Chief David Nakogee, Attawapiskat First Nation

Chief Leo Friday, Kashechewan First Nation

Chief Robert Nakogee, Fort Albany First Nation

Charlie Angus, MP Timmins – James Bay

Guy Bourgouin, MPP Mushkegowuk – James Bay

Jerry V. DeMarco, Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development

Tyler Schulz, Assistant Auditor General, Commissioner of the Environment (Acting)