



VIA EMAIL: IAAC.RegionalRoF-CdFRegionale.AEIC@Canada.ca

January 21, 2021

Re: Request for Information to Inform the Planning of the Regional Assessment in the Ring of Fire

Dear Debra Myles,

We write in support of the January 21/2021 submission of Dr. Dayna Scott.

In November 2019, Dr. Scott facilitated a Neskantaga community workshop and discussion, as well as interviews, about the potential Ring of Fire developments, potential new roads and the various impact assessment processes underway. Those discussions opened up the topic of regional impact assessment in general terms, amongst other pressing topics including the ongoing boil-water advisory and mental health challenges in the community.

On January 23, 2020 we convened a day-long meeting in Thunder Bay to discuss, a potential design of a regional assessment process and to examine relationships, decision-making, and proposals for areas of shared or exclusive jurisdiction etc.

Following the workshop, we reviewed Dr. Scott's notes for further comment.

The key messages communicated by Neskantaga knowledge holders, elders, and leadership in the community sessions are the following:

- The people in the communities are the real authority; the grassroots and the elders must be heard for any process to be legitimate;
- The appropriate Indigenous Governing Authority (IGA) must be a collective of affected First Nations, rather than one of the existing tribal councils or regional organizations, such as NAN or Matawa (on the basis of ecological connectivity and socio-cultural impacts related to probable infrastructure locations);
- An Elders Advisory Council should be an integral element at all stages of decision- making;
- The ongoing state of social emergency and pandemic must be addressed first, before new projects can be adequately considered. Proponents must be required to demonstrate that their projects are trauma informed, will mitigate the crisis, and enhance long-term social, cultural and ecological sustainability;



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- Any regional approaches need to provide a framework that can effectively guide project-level assessments, which in turn lead into community-level approvals, in line with local protocols.

Finally we would like to request that the Agency Ring of Fire team undergo cultural safety training.

Respectfully,

<Original signed by>

Chief Christopher Moonias