

## **Impact Statement Review**

The Canada Nickel Impact Statement for the Crawford nickel mine, located north of Timmins in the traditional territory of Flying Post First Nation (46km southwest and closest impacted community), outlines the proposed mining project's potential environmental, treaty rights, social, cultural, economic and cumulative impacts from the proposed mine. The project, which aims to extract nickel and other minerals, is situated on the ancestral lands of Flying Post that are a signatory of Treaty 9, signed on July 16th, 1906, by Chief Blackice at the headwaters of Groundhog Lake. The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) is responsible for evaluating the project's potential effects on Indigenous rights, the environment, and local communities. Concerns have been raised by a number of members of Flying Post First Nation (particularly members living in their traditional homelands of in and around the city of Timmins, where the project is being developed) about the lack of meaningful engagement to adequately address the project's impacts on their treaty rights, cultural heritage, environment, social and accumulative impact concerns and engage with First Nation treaty members affected by the project living in the area of Timmins. Flying Post First Nation governs from Nipigon, Ontario, roughly 700km west of the project in Robinson Superior Treaty. It is a disservice by the government of Canada to establish First Nations governance outside of their respected treaty lands, as many decisions are made for the First Nations' traditional land. Flying Post members have always lived in their traditional homelands in the Timmins area. Members residing on their traditional lands have not been given the opportunity to participate in meaningful engagement on how they will be affected by this project.

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## **History of Flying Post First Nation and Treaty 9**

Flying Post First Nation is an Anishinaabe community whose traditional territory is vast and spans the lands around Timmins, Foleyet, Chapleau, Biscotaising and Moonbeam Ontario, among other geographic locations, respectively. The community has deep historical and cultural ties to this region, which has been their ancestral and, for many members, current homelands. On July 16, 1906, the Kukatush Anishinnabe, today recognized as Flying Post 73 First Nation, signed Treaty 9 at the headwaters of Groundhog Lake at the Hudson Bay Company's "Flying Post" location. It's documented that reserve lands were selected and approved by Chief Blackice downriver from the trading post approximately 40km west of Timmins on the Groundhog River. This treaty was negotiated and orally agreed between the Canadian and Ontario governments and Flying Post First Nation to share the land. Development and settlements in northern Ontario began while the promises to protect Indigenous rights, livelihoods, and access to their traditional lands and way of life were broken.

The implementation of Treaty 9 failed to uphold the promises made to Flying Post First Nation. The Canadian and Ontario governments' policies, including the Indian Act, residential schools, taking up of lands clause, and the 60's Scoop, among others, systematically disrupted Indigenous families, cultures, and governance structures. These colonial practices fractured Flying Post First Nations community, displacing its members and relocating its governing body to Nipigon, thus moving its governance structure outside of the Nation's homelands in Treaty 9 territory. This displacement created a significant disconnect between the leadership, community members, and the traditional land steward practices. As stewards of the land, we are responsible for ensuring a healthy environment for future generations on their traditional homelands, where the Crawford nickel mine is proposed.

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### **Lack of Engagement and Disconnect with Community Members**

There are members of Flying Post First Nation living in the Timmins area have expressed frustration over the lack of meaningful engagement by Canada Nickel regarding the Crawford project. Despite the project's location on their traditional lands, many community members were not aware of consultations or given the opportunity to provide input on the project's potential impacts. This lack of engagement is particularly concerning given the project's potential effects on their treaty rights, cultural practices, and the environment.

There are members who feel marginalized and excluded from decision-making processes that directly affect their lives and lands. This disconnect undermines their ability to advocate for their rights and participate in discussions about the project's impacts on their community members and homelands.

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### **Concerns About the Crawford Nickel Project and Cumulative Effects from Resource Extraction in the Area**

The Timmins area, located in northeastern Ontario, has a long history of resource extraction, including mining, forestry, hydroelectric development, and agriculture. This region, which is part of the traditional territory of Flying Post First Nation and other Indigenous communities, has been heavily exploited for its natural resources since the late 19th century. While these industries have contributed to the economic growth and development of Ontario and Canada. Flying Post First Nation has not received the shared benefits as orally agreed upon signing Treaty 9, they have had significant negative impacts on its members who have occupied its traditional territory since time immemorial, their lands, culture, spiritual sites, environment, governance, hunting, fishing, trapping, Treaty Rights and the need to receive Free, prior and informed consent on development and project in its territory.

## **Negative Impacts on Flying Post members living in their traditional territory**

The cumulative effects of resource extraction in the Timmins area have had profound and lasting impacts on First Nations communities, including the Flying Post First Nation. These impacts include:

1. **Environmental Degradation:** Pollution from mining, logging, and hydroelectric projects has contaminated water, soil, and air, affecting the health of Indigenous communities and their ability to practice traditional activities.
2. **Loss of Traditional Lands:** Resource extraction has led to the destruction of forests, wetlands, and waterways, reducing access to traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering areas. This loss of land has undermined the cultural and spiritual practices of Indigenous peoples.
3. **Displacement and Disruption:** Hydroelectric dams and mining operations have displaced Indigenous communities and disrupted their way of life. Flooding caused by dams has destroyed sacred sites and burial grounds, causing deep emotional and cultural harm.
4. **Health Impacts:** Exposure to pollutants from mining and industrial activities has led to health issues such as respiratory problems, cancer, and waterborne illnesses in Indigenous communities.
5. **Economic Marginalization:** While resource extraction has generated wealth for corporations and governments, Flying Post First Nation has often been excluded from the economic benefits. Many members continue to face high levels of poverty and unemployment and are unable to pursue a traditional way of life.
6. **Cultural Erosion:** The destruction of the land and disruption of traditional practices have contributed to the erosion of Indigenous languages, knowledge systems, and cultural identity.
7. **Lack of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and Treaty Rights:** Flying Post members living in the Timmins area, their traditional lands, have frequently been excluded from decision-making processes related to resource extraction projects, violating their rights under UNDRIP and other international agreements. Canada and Ontario have failed to uphold their treaty obligations and exacerbated problems by allowing their governing body to relocate from its traditional territory in Treaty 9 to the Robinson Superior Treaty.

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**The Area Cannot Support Another Large Mining Project**

The Timmins area is already under significant environmental and social strain due to decades of resource extraction. The cumulative impacts of mining, forestry, hydroelectric development, and agriculture have left the land and waterways degraded and unable to support additional large-scale projects like the Canada Nickel Crawford mine. Key reasons why the area cannot sustain another major mining project include:

1. **Environmental Limits:** The region's ecosystems are already stressed from pollution, habitat destruction, and biodiversity loss. Adding another mining project, let alone developing a Nickel district, which Canada Nickel expresses would exacerbate these issues, further contaminating water sources and disrupting wildlife and violating the treaty rights of Flying Post First Nation members.
2. **Cumulative Effects:** The combined impacts of multiple resource extraction activities over the last 120 years have created a tipping point where the land can no longer recover. Flying Post members living in the Timmins area are already struggling to maintain their traditional practices due to the degradation of the environment and left out of proper consultation due to lack of representation in their traditional area. The Federal Government of Canada allows its governing body to be removed from its traditional territory outside of Treaty 9, which has led to members not having an equal opportunity to run for their First Nations governance from their traditional territory.
3. **Social and Cultural Impacts:** Flying Post members in the Timmins area have borne the brunt of resource extraction's negative effects while decision-making on their behalf is conducted under the "Indian Act" by a Chief and Council who live outside their traditional territory, which creates a disconnect regarding knowledge of its community values, sacred sites, and traditional knowledge of the area. Another large mining project would further marginalize these members, undermining their rights and well-being rights affirmed under section 35 of the Constitution Act of Canada.
4. **Lack of Capacity for Mitigation:** The existing regulatory framework and mitigation measures have failed to adequately address the impacts of resource extraction on Flying Post members living in the Timmins area. There is no guarantee that the Canada Nickel project would be managed in a way that respects Indigenous rights and protects the environment and share the economic benefits of the project for members living in their traditional lands affected by the project. The Crawford nickel project would contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and environmental degradation, contradicting global efforts to combat climate change and transition to sustainable practices. They also promote the project as a carbon-neutral project based on unfounded or scientifically proven data that they can infuse carbon into the waste rock of the mine. There are other viable critical mineral projects and areas that can produce critical mineral needs for Canada. The value of nickel has experienced a significant decrease in recent years due to a combination

of factors, including **oversupply**, **reduced demand from key industries**, and **competition from cheaper producers** like Indonesia. Here's a breakdown of these factors:

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### Oversupply in the Global Market

- **Increased Production:** Global nickel production has surged in recent years, particularly from countries like **Indonesia**, which has dramatically expanded its nickel mining and processing capabilities. This oversupply has driven down prices.
  - **Stockpiles:** High inventories of nickel in warehouses and stockpiles have further contributed to the price decline, as the market is flooded with excess supply.
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### Reduced Demand from the Automotive Industry

- **Shift in Battery Technology:** Nickel is a key component in lithium-ion batteries, particularly for electric vehicles (EVs). However, automakers are increasingly exploring **alternative battery chemistries** that use less nickel or none at all. For example:
    - **Lithium Iron Phosphate (LFP) Batteries:** These batteries, which do not require nickel, are cheaper and safer, making them attractive for many EV manufacturers, especially in China.
    - **Cobalt and Manganese Alternatives:** Some battery makers are reducing nickel content in favour of other materials to lower costs and address supply chain concerns.
  - **Slow EV Adoption in Some Regions:** While EV adoption is growing, it has not yet reached the levels needed to sustain high nickel demand, particularly in regions where infrastructure and consumer adoption lag.
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### Competition from Indonesia and China

- **Cheaper Production Costs:** Indonesia and China has become the world's largest producer of nickel, thanks to its vast reserves, low labor costs, and government support for mining and processing. The country's has invested heavily in **nickel smelting and refining**, allowing it to produce nickel at a much lower cost than competitors like Canada.

- **Export Policies:** Indonesia has implemented policies to restrict the export of raw nickel ore, forcing companies to process nickel domestically. This has attracted foreign investment in processing facilities, further solidifying Indonesia's dominance in the global nickel market.
  - **Environmental and Labor Concerns:** While Indonesia's nickel production is cheaper, it often comes with significant environmental and social costs, including deforestation, pollution, and poor labour practices. However, these issues have not deterred buyers seeking low-cost nickel and markets will continue to choose the cheaper available market.
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### Economic and Geopolitical Factors

- **Global Economic Slowdown:** Economic uncertainty, particularly in key markets like China, has reduced demand for nickel in industries such as stainless steel (which accounts for a significant portion of nickel use).
  - **Trade Tensions:** Geopolitical tensions and trade restrictions have disrupted supply chains and created volatility in commodity markets, further depressing nickel prices and new tariffs imposed by the United States.
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### Impact on the Nickel Industry in Canada

For countries like Canada, which have higher production costs due to stricter environmental regulations and labor standards, the decline in nickel prices and increased competition from countries like Indonesia and other country's pose significant challenges:

- **Economic Viability:** High-cost nickel producers in Canada may struggle to compete with cheaper alternatives, making new projects like the **Crawford nickel mine** less economically viable.
  - **Job Losses and Investment Decline:** A downturn in the nickel industry could lead to job losses and reduced investment in mining communities, particularly in regions like Timmins that rely heavily on resource extraction. This would contribute to the mining trend of Boom and Bust economies within mining-specific regions, like the Timmins area.
  - **Environmental Trade-Offs:** To remain competitive, Canadian nickel producers may face pressure to lower costs, potentially compromising environmental and social standards.
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### Conclusion

The decline in nickel value and demand, driven by oversupply, reduced demand from the automotive industry, and competition from low-cost producers like Indonesia, has created significant challenges for the global nickel industry. For Canada, this trend raises questions about the feasibility of new nickel projects and highlights the need for innovation, diversification, and sustainable practices to remain competitive in a rapidly changing market. While nickel remains a critical mineral for the energy transition, the industry must adapt to shifting demand and global dynamics to ensure long-term viability.

5. **Data Collected:** Flying Post Membership living in the Timmins area have not been engaged by Canada Nickel, Flying Post Chief and Council and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada. By not engaging with the local membership of Flying Post First Nation living in the Timmins area on this project, there are many objections. Examples are missed cultural values and traditional knowledge on subjects such as burial grounds, cultural sites, harvesting areas, cultural practices, effects on language, cultural revitalization efforts, hunting grounds, significant culturally important spiritual beings such as Maymayngohaynsug (the little people) and culturally significant animals such as Manitou Mooz (Spirit Moose) and sturgeon among many, traditional knowledge insights from elders and accumulative impacts to members living in the Timmins area on their traditional lands have not been included in Canada Nickels Impact Statement and the duty to properly consult to give, Free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) to such projects. Canada Nickel uses this to diminish the rights of our members living in the area and to address concerns of the project and the need to engage with local knowledge and treaty rights holders. The consent and contribution of members living in the project area and participating in the Impact Assessment process of the project undermines the legitimacy of proper consultation which is required under the Impact Assessment Act to approve such projects. Examples in the report that are not factual are claims that Nipigon, Ontario, is part of Flying Post First Nations traditional territory and that the majority of its memberships hunt, fish and trap outside of Treaty 9. This is a false statement; the Timmins area has always been the traditional homeland of the Kukatush Anishinaabe, which is recognized today as Flying Post First Nation. Members have always occupied their traditional territory and utilized their reserve land along the Groundhog River. The Impact Statement claims 89 community members were interviewed for this project; there is reason to believe that this is reused from previous interviews; interviews and data collected for the Canada Nickel Impact Statement were generated from the "I AM GOLD" mining project conducted by a consulting firm with results owned by Flying Post First Nation. The demographics of the band have changed since this consultation, and the locations of both projects are vastly different. That data has nothing to do with the Canada Nickel Mine Impact Statement, is outdated, and doesn't appropriately incorporate Flying Post members living in the Timmins area.

There have been no community meetings or engagement opportunities with membership about the mining project or any information shared or distributed to membership offering opportunities to contribute to the project's Impact Statement and to engage in proper consultation. Canada Nickel has ignored concerns and emails from community members. The concerns of local Flying Post members not being engaged in this project or being able to contribute to the Impact Assessment process are well documented with the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada.

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## **Conclusion**

The history of resource extraction in the Timmins area has left a legacy of environmental degradation, cultural erosion, and social marginalization for Indigenous communities like Flying Post First Nation. The cumulative impacts of mining, forestry, hydroelectric development, and agriculture have pushed the region to its ecological limits, making it unable to support another large-scale mining project like Canada Nickel's Crawford mine. To uphold Indigenous rights, protect the environment, and ensure a sustainable future, it is essential to prioritize the voices and concerns of Flying Post Members living in its traditional lands and halt further resource extraction in the area. Without meaningful engagement and respect for its member's rights, projects like Canada Nickel risk perpetuating historical injustices and causing irreparable harm to the land and its people.

The Crawford Nickel project highlights the ongoing challenges Indigenous communities face in asserting their rights and protecting their lands in the face of resource development. Flying Post First Nation's history of displacement, coupled with the lack of meaningful engagement by Canada Nickel, has left many community members feeling marginalized and disconnected from decisions that directly affect their lives. To uphold the principles of UNDRIP and ensure that Indigenous rights are respected, it is essential that Flying Post First Nation and its members are actively involved in the decision-making process and that their concerns about the project's impacts on their treaty rights, culture, and environment are addressed. Without this, the project risks perpetuating the historical injustices faced by Flying Post First Nation and undermining their ability to thrive on their traditional lands. Canada Nickel, Flying Post First Nation Chief and Council and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada have failed to engage with local members on this project and have violated their treaty rights and UNDRIP. If projects are to move forward, members living in their traditional homelands who are directly effected by these projects need to be consulted and Free, prior and informed consent needs to be granted. Economic benefits need to stay within the traditional territory so that members directly impacted by resource extraction can mitigate the negative effects

to their Treaty Rights and cultural values and promote cultural revitalization and self-determination.

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## Example of cumulative effects in Treaty 9

### Mining

Timmins is often referred to as the "City with a Heart of Gold" due to its rich mining history, particularly in gold production. The Porcupine Gold Rush in the early 1900s led to the establishment of large-scale mining operations, including the Hollinger and Dome mines. Over the decades, mining expanded to include other minerals such as nickel, copper, and zinc. While mining has brought jobs and economic activity to the region, First Nations have not benefited. It has also caused environmental degradation, including deforestation, water contamination, and habitat destruction. Tailings ponds and waste rock from mining operations have polluted local waterways, affecting fish populations and the traditional practices of Flying Post First Nation affirmed under Treaty 9. The traditional territory of Flying Post First Nation has been one of the most prolific gold-producing regions in Canada since the Porcupine Gold Rush began in 1909, but those resources have not been shared with Flying Post, who has had an oral treaty with Ontario and Canada to share the land and its resources since 1906, pre-dating any mining activities and mineral extraction in the area. Over the past century, the area has yielded an enormous amount of gold, contributing significantly to Canada's status as one of the world's top gold-producing countries while leaving Flying Post members to live in poverty and despair.

### Estimated Gold Production in the Timmins Area Since 1900

Since the early 20th century, the Timmins area has produced an estimated 70 million ounces of gold at an estimated value of 70 billion dollars. If Flying Post First Nation received 1% of every ounce of gold mined in its traditional homelands, it would have received 700 million dollars in compensation to put things in perspective. This figure includes production from some of the most famous mines in Canadian history, such as:

- **Hollinger Mine:** One of the largest gold mines in North America, it operated from 1910 to 1968 and produced approximately 19.6 million ounces of gold.
- **Dome Mine:** Another iconic mine, it began production in 1910 and is still in operation today. It has produced over 17 million ounces of gold.
- **McIntyre Mine:** Operating from 1912 to 1988, it produced around 10.8 million ounces of gold.
- **Pamour Mine:** This mine, which operated from the 1930s to the 1990s, contributed significantly to the region's gold output.

- **Other Mines:** Numerous smaller mines and operations in the Timmins area have also contributed to the total gold production.

## **Context and Significance**

The Timmins area's gold production has made it a cornerstone of Canada's mining industry. The region's gold deposits are part of the Abitibi Greenstone Belt, one of the most mineral-rich areas in the world. The wealth generated from gold mining has driven economic development in the region, but it has also come at a cost to the environment and Flying Post First Nation, whose traditional lands have been heavily impacted by mining activities. An example of such impacts is the The Kamiskotia Mining Disaster that occurred on February 10, 1961, near Timmins, Ontario 30 km east of Flying Post First Nation Reserve, at the Kam-Kotia Mine, a copper and zinc mine. The disaster was caused by the collapse of a tailings dam, which released approximately 1.5 million tons of toxic mining waste into the surrounding environment. The waste flowed into the Kamiskotia River and eventually into the Porcupine River, causing widespread contamination.

## **Impact on the Area**

### **1. Environmental Damage:**

- The spill contaminated waterways with heavy metals and acidic runoff, devastating aquatic ecosystems.
- Fish populations were severely affected, and the water became unsafe for drinking or recreational use.
- Soil and vegetation in the area were also contaminated, impacting wildlife and local agriculture and traditional medicines.

### **2. Health and Safety Concerns:**

- The release of toxic materials posed health risks to Flying Post members, who relied on the land and waterways for fishing, hunting, and drinking water.
- Long-term exposure to contaminated water and soil raised concerns about chronic health issues.

### **3. Economic Impact:**

- The disaster led to costly cleanup efforts and legal battles, straining local resources.
- The mine was eventually abandoned, resulting in job losses and economic decline for the area.

### **4. Legacy of Contamination:**

- The Kamiskotia site remains one of Ontario's most significant environmental liabilities. Cleanup efforts, including the construction of a new dam and water treatment facilities, have been ongoing for decades.
- The disaster highlighted the dangers of inadequate tailings management and led to stricter regulations for mining operations in Canada.

The Kamiskotia Mining Disaster is a stark reminder of the environmental and social costs of mining. It left a lasting scar on the Timmins area and Flying Post First Nation, contaminating land and water, harming ecosystems, and affecting the health and livelihoods of local communities, including Indigenous peoples, while giving them little to no economic benefits. The disaster underscored the need for better environmental safeguards and responsible resource extraction practices and the need to consult and engage affected First Nation members living in the areas of mining projects, which has not been incorporated into the Canada Nickel Impact Statement.

## **Environmental and Social Impacts**

While the economic benefits of gold mining are significant, the environmental and social costs cannot be ignored. The extraction of 70 million ounces of gold has led to:

- **Deforestation and Habitat Destruction:** Large areas of land have been cleared for mining operations, disrupting ecosystems and wildlife habitats.
- **Water Contamination:** Mining activities have released harmful chemicals, such as mercury and cyanide, into local waterways, affecting fish populations and water quality.
- **Tailings and Waste Rock:** The disposal of mining waste has created environmental hazards, including acid mine drainage and heavy metal contamination.
- **Impact on Indigenous Communities:** Flying Post First Nation and other Indigenous groups have faced displacement, loss of traditional lands, and disruption of cultural practices due to mining activities.

## **Conclusion**

The Timmins area has been a gold mining powerhouse for over a century, producing an estimated 70 million ounces of gold since the 1900s at an estimated dollar value of 70 billion dollars. While this has brought economic prosperity to the region, Flying Post has not benefited financially; it has also caused significant environmental degradation and social challenges, particularly for Flying Post First Nation members living in the area. As the region faces the prospect of new mining projects, such as Canada Nickel's Crawford mine, it is crucial to consider the cumulative impacts of over a century of resource extraction and prioritize sustainable practices that respect Indigenous rights and protect the environment and the need to adequately share the resources and economic benefits of such projects.

## **Forestry**

The forestry industry has also played a significant role in the Timmins area, the traditional homelands of Flying Post First Nation with large-scale logging operations harvesting the boreal forest for timber and pulp. Clear-cutting, the spraying of Glyphosates to control unwanted growth of deciduous trees undesired by industry and unsustainable logging practices converting ecosystems into “fibre farms” for lumber mills have led to the loss of biodiversity, disruption of wildlife habitats, poisoning of water sources, lakes and rivers and reduced access to traditional hunting and gathering areas straining food security and access to traditional foods. The destruction of forests has also impacted the cultural and spiritual practices of members, who rely on the land for ceremonies and sustenance. The economic benefits from forestry have not been passed down to Flying Post First Nation.

The use of glyphosate (a widely used herbicide) in forestry, combined with the conversion of the boreal forest into monoculture pine fibre farms for lumber mills, has significant negative impacts on the environment and Indigenous communities. Below is a summary of these effects:

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## 1. Environmental Impacts of Glyphosate Use

- **Loss of Biodiversity:** Glyphosate is used to kill broadleaf plants and shrubs that compete with commercially valuable tree species like pine. This practice reduces plant diversity, which in turn affects the entire ecosystem, including insects, birds, and mammals that rely on diverse vegetation for food and habitat.
  - **Soil Degradation:** Glyphosate can persist in the soil, disrupting microbial communities and reducing soil fertility over time. This impacts the long-term health of the forest ecosystem.
  - **Water Contamination:** Glyphosate can leach into nearby waterways, contaminating drinking water sources and harming aquatic ecosystems. This poses risks to fish populations and other aquatic life.
  - **Impact on Non-Target Species:** Glyphosate does not discriminate between target and non-target plants, leading to the destruction of medicinal plants, berries, and other culturally significant vegetation used by Indigenous communities.
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## 2. Conversion of Boreal Forests into Pine Fiber Farms

- **Monoculture Plantations:** Converting diverse boreal forests into monoculture pine plantations reduces ecosystem resilience. Monocultures are more susceptible to pests, diseases, and climate change impacts, which can lead to large-scale forest die-offs.

- **Loss of Old-Growth Forests:** The boreal forest is home to ancient trees and complex ecosystems that take centuries to develop. Replacing these with fast-growing pine plantations destroys irreplaceable habitats and carbon sinks.
  - **Disruption of Wildlife Habitats:** Many species, such as caribou, moose, and migratory birds, rely on the diverse structure of natural boreal forests. Monoculture plantations cannot support the same level of biodiversity, leading to population declines.
  - **Carbon Emissions:** The boreal forest is one of the world's largest carbon sinks. Clearing these forests for plantations releases stored carbon into the atmosphere, exacerbating climate change.
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### 3. Impacts on First Nations

- **Loss of Traditional Lands:** The conversion of boreal forests into fiber farms destroys the traditional territories of Indigenous communities, undermining their ability to practice hunting, fishing, gathering, and cultural activities.
  - **Violation of Treaty Rights:** Many Indigenous communities have treaty rights to use and manage their traditional lands. Forestry practices that degrade these lands violate these rights and undermine Indigenous sovereignty.
  - **Health Risks:** Glyphosate contamination of water and food sources poses health risks to Indigenous communities, who rely on the land for sustenance and medicine.
  - **Cultural Erosion:** The destruction of culturally significant plants, animals, and landscapes erodes Indigenous knowledge systems, traditions, and spiritual practices.
  - **Lack of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC):** Indigenous communities are often excluded from decision-making processes related to forestry operations, violating their rights under the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**.
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### 4. Cumulative Effects on the Environment and First Nations

- The combined effects of glyphosate use and the conversion of boreal forests into monoculture plantations create a cycle of environmental degradation and social harm. Indigenous communities bear the brunt of these impacts, as they are disproportionately affected by the loss of biodiversity, contamination of resources, and disruption of traditional ways of life.
- These practices also undermine global efforts to combat climate change and protect biodiversity, as the boreal forest plays a critical role in regulating the Earth's climate and supporting unique ecosystems.

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## Conclusion

The use of glyphosate in forestry and the conversion of boreal forests into pine fibre farms have profound adverse effects on the environment and Indigenous communities. These practices destroy biodiversity, contaminate ecosystems, and violate the rights of Flying Post members to their traditional lands and resources. To address these issues, there must be a shift toward sustainable forestry practices that prioritize ecosystem health, Indigenous rights, and long-term environmental stewardship. This includes ending the use of harmful chemicals like glyphosate, protecting old-growth forests, and ensuring that Flying Post First Nation members living in its traditional homelands have a meaningful role in decision-making processes.

## Hydroelectric Dams

Hydroelectric development in the region, particularly along the Mattagami River and Groundhog River, has provided energy for industrial and residential use but has come at a high cost to Flying Post First Nation, whose reserve currently is not connected to the provincial power grid. The construction of dams has flooded vast areas of land, destroying ecosystems, displacing wildlife and spiritual beings such as “The Little People,” and submerging sacred sites and burial grounds like the ones on documented on Horwood Lake and the Groundhog. These changes have disrupted traditional practices such as fishing, trapping, and rice harvesting, which are integral to our cultural identity and food security. The Groundhog River, Mattagami River, and Moose River Basin in the Timmins area are home to multiple hydroelectric dams and control dams developed over the past century. These dams generate significant revenue for energy companies and the government but have come at a high cost to the environment and Indigenous communities like Flying Post 73. Below is a summary of the key dams, their impacts, and First Nations' economic inequities.

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## Key Hydroelectric Dams in the Area and Control Dams

1. **Mattagami River Dams:**
  - **Little Long Generating Station:** Built in 1963, this dam is one of the largest in the region.
  - **Smoky Falls Generating Station:** Constructed in the 1930s and later upgraded, this dam is a major source of hydroelectric power.
  - **Harmon Generating Station:** Built in the 1960s, it is part of the Mattagami River hydroelectric complex.
  - **Kipling Generating Station:** Another key dam on the Mattagami River, completed in the 1960s.
2. **Groundhog River Dams:**

- **Lower Sturgeon Generating Station:** Located on the Groundhog River, this dam contributes to the region's hydroelectric capacity.
  - 3. **Ivanhoe River Dam:** Located on Ivanhoe lake, the control dam has altered the route of the river where communities members have sacred sites and burial grounds, a historical community settlement on the original river banks and displaced members living on the lake by creating a provincial park and development of waterfront lots for cottages.
  - 4. **Moose River Basin Dams:**
    - **Otter Rapids Generating Station:** Situated on the Abitibi River, which flows into the Moose River Basin, this dam is part of the larger hydroelectric network.
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## Negative Impacts of Hydroelectric Dams

1. **Environmental Damage:**
  - **Flooding of Land:** Dams have flooded vast areas of boreal forest, wetlands, and river valleys, destroying habitats for wildlife, fish, and plants.
  - **Disruption of Waterways:** Dams alter natural water flow, leading to changes in water temperature, oxygen levels, and sediment transport. This disrupts aquatic ecosystems and fish populations, including species like walleye and sturgeon that are vital to Indigenous subsistence fishing.
  - **Loss of Biodiversity:** The flooding and fragmentation of ecosystems have led to declines in species that depend on intact boreal forests and rivers.
2. **Destruction of Cultural Sites:**
  - **Sacred Sites and Burial Grounds:** Many Indigenous cultural and spiritual sites, including burial grounds, have been submerged or destroyed by reservoir flooding. This has caused profound cultural and emotional harm to Flying Post community's members.
  - **Loss of Traditional Knowledge:** The destruction of the land and waterways has disrupted the transmission of traditional knowledge and historical gathering and summer and winter living sites which is deeply tied to the environment.
3. **Irreversible Damage to Waterways:**
  - **Mercury Contamination:** Flooding caused by dams can lead to the release of mercury from submerged soil, contaminating fish and water supplies. This poses serious health risks to Indigenous communities that rely on fish as a primary food source.

- **Altered Ecosystems:** The changes to river systems are often irreversible, making it difficult or impossible to restore ecosystems to their natural state.
4. **Impact on First Nations' Traditional Way of Life:**
- **Loss of Access to Resources:** Dams have restricted access to traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering areas, undermining the ability of Indigenous communities to sustain their way of life.
  - **Food Insecurity:** Contaminated fish and reduced wildlife populations have led to food insecurity for Flying Post members living in its traditional homelands.
  - **Cultural Erosion:** The loss of land and resources has eroded cultural practices, languages, and spiritual connections to the land and has destroyed sacred sites and portals to the spirit world.
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## Economic Benefits and Inequities

1. **Revenue Generated:**
- Hydroelectric dams in the region generate significant revenue for energy companies like **Ontario Power Generation (OPG)** and the provincial government. For example, the Mattagami River hydroelectric complex alone generates hundreds of millions of dollars annually.
  - The energy produced by these dams powers homes, industries, and businesses across Ontario, contributing to the province's economic development. Yet, Flying Post members do not have access to electricity on their reserve. Members are subjected to a “Band Council Resolution Chronological No 2023-02” enacted by its Chief and Council dated March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, prohibiting them from constructing a home or permanent structure on their reserve. Violating its constitutional rights affirmed under section 35 of the Canadian Constitution.
2. **Exploitation of First Nations:**
- **Exclusion from Benefits:** Despite the significant revenue generated by hydroelectric projects, First Nations have historically been excluded from sharing economic benefits. Many communities near these dams continue to face high levels of poverty and lack access to basic infrastructure.
  - **Lack of Consultation:** Many dams were built without the free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) of Indigenous communities, violating their rights under treaties and international law.
  - **Unfair Compensation:** When compensation has been provided, it has often been inadequate and does not address the projects' long-term environmental and cultural impacts.
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## Conclusion

The hydroelectric dams on the Groundhog River, Mattagami River, and Moose River Basin have provided significant economic benefits to energy companies and the government but have caused irreversible damage to the environment and Indigenous communities. The flooding of land, destruction of cultural sites, and disruption of ecosystems have undermined the traditional way of life for First Nations. At the same time, the economic benefits have largely bypassed these communities. To address these injustices, there must be a commitment to meaningful consultation, fair compensation, and the inclusion of Flying Post members living in its traditional territory in the decision-making processes. Additionally, efforts should be made to mitigate the environmental impacts of existing dams and explore more sustainable energy solutions that respect Indigenous rights and protect the land for future generations.

## Agriculture

While agriculture was less prominent in the Timmins area in the past as compared to mining, forestry and energy sectors, it is growing significantly due to climate change and fertile lands referred to as the “clay belt,” which is located on the traditional territory of Flying Post First Nation and has contributed to the alteration of the landscape and negative impacts to treaty rights. The conversion of the boreal forest and its ecosystems for farming lands has led to habitat loss and fragmentation, affecting members' availability of traditional foods and medicinal plants. The Northern Clay Belt in northeastern Ontario, stretching along Highway 11, has a long history of agricultural activity. This region, characterized by its fertile clay soils, was initially promoted for farming in the early 20th century as part of government-led settlement programs. However, the short growing season, harsh climate, and remote location limited its agricultural potential. In recent years, **climate change** and **advancements in farming technology** have led to increased agricultural activity in the area. Still, this expansion has come at a cost to the environment and Indigenous communities. It has not involved them in consultation or acquired Free, prior and informed consent by members living in their traditional homelands to perform these activities.

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### Historical Agriculture in the Northern Clay Belt

- **Early 20th Century:** The Canadian government encouraged settlers to farm the Northern Clay Belt as part of efforts to populate the region and develop its economy. However, the challenging climate and poor infrastructure made large-scale farming difficult.
- **Limited Success:** Many early farms failed due to the short growing season, poor soil drainage, and lack of access to markets. Agriculture remained small-scale and focused on subsistence farming.

- **Forestry Dominance:** While agriculture struggled, the region's economy became dominated by forestry and mining, which were better suited to the northern environment.
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## Recent Increase in Agricultural Activity

- **Climate Change:** Warming temperatures and longer growing seasons have made the Northern Clay Belt more viable for agriculture. Crops that were once difficult to grow, such as corn and soybeans, are now becoming more common.
  - **Technological Advancements:** Improved farming techniques, machinery, and genetically modified crops have increased productivity and made farming in the region more feasible.
  - **Government Support:** Provincial and federal programs have encouraged agricultural expansion in the north as part of efforts to boost food security and economic development.
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## Negative Impacts on First Nations

The expansion of agriculture in the Northern Clay Belt has significant negative impacts on First Nations' treaty rights, food security, and cultural practices:

### 1. Conversion of Boreal Forest to Agricultural Land

- **Loss of Traditional Lands:** The conversion of boreal forest to farmland destroys the natural habitats Indigenous communities rely on for hunting, fishing, and gathering. This undermines their treaty rights to access and use their traditional territories.
- **Disruption of Ecosystems:** The boreal forest is a critical ecosystem that supports diverse plant and animal life. Clearing forests for agriculture disrupts these ecosystems, reducing biodiversity and impacting species important to Indigenous food systems and cultural practices.

### 2. Impact on Food Security and Traditional Foods

- **Loss of Access to Traditional Foods:** Agriculture reduces the availability of traditional foods such as moose, fish, berries, and medicinal plants, which are essential to the diet and health of Indigenous communities.
- **Contamination of Resources:** The use of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers in farming contaminates soil, water, and plants, making traditional foods unsafe to consume.

- **Cultural Erosion:** The loss of access to traditional foods and medicines undermines Indigenous knowledge systems and cultural practices that are tied to the land.

### 3. Economic Inequities

- **Exclusion from Benefits:** While agriculture generates economic benefits for farmers and the government, Flying Post First Nation is excluded from sharing in these benefits. Many First Nations in the region continue to face high levels of poverty and lack access to basic services.
- **Lack of Consultation:** Agricultural expansion often occurs without the free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) of Indigenous communities, violating their rights under treaties and international law.

### 4. Environmental Damage from Agricultural Chemicals

- **Pesticides and Herbicides:** Chemicals such as glyphosate (a common herbicide) are used to control weeds and pests, but they can contaminate waterways, harm non-target plants and animals, are linked to cancer, and persist in the environment.
- **Fertilizers:** The runoff of nitrogen and phosphorus from fertilizers can lead to algal blooms in waterways, depleting oxygen levels and harming aquatic life.
- **Soil Degradation:** Intensive farming practices can deplete soil nutrients and reduce its long-term fertility, impacting the health of the land.

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## Conclusion

The expansion of agriculture in the Northern Clay Belt, driven by climate change and technological advancements, has created economic opportunities but has also caused significant harm to the environment and Indigenous communities. The conversion of boreal forest to farmland undermines First Nations' treaty rights, food security, and cultural practices, while the use of agricultural chemicals further degrades the land and water. To address these issues, there must be a commitment to sustainable farming practices, meaningful consultation with Flying Post First Nation, and the inclusion of members living on its traditional homelands in the economic benefits of agricultural development. Protecting the boreal forest and respecting Indigenous rights are essential for ensuring a just and sustainable future for the region.