



February 17, 2023

FONOM joins with Police Departments and Association to discuss Catch and Release

Members of the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) Board met with the Sault Ste. Marie Police Services Board Chair, Sault Ste. Marie Police Service, Timmins Police Service, and the North Bay Police Association, to discuss the negative impacts Federal Bill C75 is having on communities across Ontario.

During a FONOM Board meeting in July 2022, Sault Ste. Marie's Police Chief Hugh Stevenson, shared the current catch-and-release procedures. At the meeting, FONOM membership committed to create a Northern Task Force to focus on the issue. The Task Force will consist of three FONOM board members, two municipal police chiefs, and an OPP service board member. The first meeting of the task force was held in Sault Ste Marie on Wednesday, February 16th, 2023. See below for a list of attendees.

"Citizens of Northern Ontario are angry. People that break into our homes and traumatize law-abiding citizens are arrested by police, then released the same day, some of them, committing another crime later that day," said FONOM President Danny Whalen. *"The lack of movement to examine the legislation four years after implantation is unacceptable and we will continue to bring a northern voice to decision makers."*

Moving forward, FONOM will work to increase participation from northern police services such as the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service, other northern Police Association representatives and government officials. The task force is communicating with the Attorney General's and Solicitor General's officers to participate in ongoing discussions around catch and release.

During the meeting Chief Stevenson, an Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP) Board Member, shared with the FONOM four recommended amendments for Bill C-75.

1. Create a designation of a chronic persistent offender,
2. Allow community impact statements at bail and at bail hearings,
3. Creating reverse onus in bail for all firearm offences, and
4. Ensure bail-related firearm charges go to the superior court for bail hearing.

"Violent crime up 80% in last five years in our community," stated Sault Ste Marie Police Chief Hugh Stevenson, *"cyclical issues continue to cost municipalities, in staffing and financial resources for EMS, Police, Fire, Court and Correction services for these violent incidents."*

The next Taskforce meeting will be held in Timmins on April 12th, ahead of the OACP Zone 1A meeting. Chief Stevenson has agreed to participate in a panel discussion on Catch and Release during the May FONOM Conference in Parry Sound.

FONOM is an association of some 110 districts/municipalities/cities/towns in Northeastern Ontario mandated to work for the betterment of municipal government in Northern Ontario and strive for improved legislation respecting local government in the North. It is a membership-based association drawing members from Northeastern Ontario and is governed by an 11-member board.



Participants at the February 15th Catch n Release Task Force meeting.

John Bruno – Sault Ste. Marie Police Services Board Chair
Chief Hugh Stevenson, M.O.M., Ed.D. – Sault Ste. Marie Police Service
Deputy Chief Robert MacLachlan – Sault Ste. Marie Police Service
Chief Daniel Foy – Timmins Police Service
Inspector Darren Dinel – Timmins Police Service
Sgt. Darcy Wall – North Bay Police Services Association - 2nd Vice President
Sandra Hollingsworth – SSM City Council Ward 1
Lynn Watson – Mayor Echo Bay
John Curly – Timmins Councillor
Danny Whalen – Temiskaming Shores Councillor – FONOM President

Mac Bain – FONOM, Executive Director
Lincoln Louttit – Sault Ste Marie Police Service, Manager - Corporate Communications, Planning & Research