

May 15, 2025

MEDIA RELEASE

FONOM Applauds “Tariff and Northern” Focus of 2025 Ontario Budget

Temiskaming Shores, ON – The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) is encouraged by the Province's 2025 Budget, tabled today by Ontario's Minister of Finance, the Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy. FONOM believes this year's Budget reflects a "Tariff and Northern" approach, offering a strong foundation for future growth and investment in Ontario's North.

FONOM is particularly pleased to see an increase in the funding envelope for the Connecting Link Program and the creation of a new special fund to support major infrastructure projects along connecting links of regional and national significance. Additionally, introducing a dedicated Pothole Fund for smaller northern and rural communities is a welcome and practical investment in road safety and reliability.

The Province's recommitment to completing the twinning of Highway 69, with ongoing land acquisitions, is another critical step in improving Northern transportation. While no construction dates were announced for the long-anticipated 2+1 highway initiative, first proposed in November 2022, FONOM is encouraged that the Province no longer refers to the need for a pilot project, suggesting progress in implementation.

Further positive developments in the Budget include funding for GO Transit refurbishments that will directly benefit Thunder Bay and the Nipissing District, and targeted financial support for Northern Colleges in the 2025-2026 fiscal year. FONOM also welcomes the Province's continued investment in skilled trades, particularly supporting the Mining, Forestry, and Industrial sectors vital to the northern economy.

Notably, expanding the Provincial definition of "Northern Ontario" to include the District of Muskoka marks a significant shift. FONOM welcomes this change and looks forward to working collaboratively with Muskoka on shared priorities that benefit the broader northern region. The continued growth of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) is another

1-2

positive signal of the government's commitment to long-term regional development.

"Today's Budget sends the right signals to communities across the North," said FONOM President Danny Whalen, "we're seeing tangible investments in infrastructure, transportation, education, and economic development. While there's still work to be done—particularly on the 2+1 highway—this Budget makes us optimistic."

FONOM looks forward to continued collaboration with the Province as these commitments are implemented.

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 that draws its members from northeastern Ontario and is governed by an 11-member board.



President Danny Whalen

705-622-2479