



Timmins Chamber of Commerce  
Chambre de commerce de Timmins

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### NEW MINISTER OF NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT AND MINES MEETS WITH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD

**TIMMINS** - Yesterday, representatives from the Timmins Chamber of Commerce met with Michael Gravelle, newly appointed Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Gravelle visited the Chamber of Commerce to learn about issues affecting the success of local businesses and the economic development of Northern Ontario. Among the topics discussed were the benefits of revenue sharing, the provincial diamond tax, the need for a formal process for First Nations consultations, the need for release from financial assurance when mines close, and the importance of having representation from all parts of Northern Ontario on the Board of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation.

With regard to the issue of revenue sharing for Northern Ontario, the Chamber of Commerce advocates the equitable sharing of revenue that is brought into the province through natural resources extracted from the North. With an economy valued at \$24.5 billion, Northern Ontario and its resources contribute substantially to the provincial economy. "Southern Ontario relies heavily on the revenue from these northern resources, and it is important that some of the revenues are re-invested in Northern infrastructure in an equitable manner. While programs such as NOHFC aim to do this, the province could ensure that funds are reinvested fairly throughout the province by implementing revenue sharing models," stated Chamber President Marilyn Wood.

Minister Gravelle indicated that revenue sharing is currently not on the table as a discussion item, but that the provincial government is committed to investing in Northern Ontario through Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation and other rural infrastructure funding programs. To that end, Gravelle stated that the government is committed to increasing NOHFC funding in order to stimulate economic development in the North.

However, while there are NOHFC board members from North Bay, Sudbury, Sault Ste Marie and Thunder Bay, there is currently no representation from Timmins, which was a concern expressed by the Chamber of Commerce. In order to ensure that the NOHFC board justly represents Northern Ontario, Wood requested that the NOHFC board include a representative from Timmins.

Wood thanked the minister for meeting with the Chamber of Commerce. "We look forward to continuing to share with the government the issues that affect our members and the economic well-being of Northern Ontario, so that we may work together to foster a positive business climate in our region. As a member-driven organization, the Chamber strives to make the voices of its members heard so as to continuously improve the ability to conduct business in Timmins."

Minister Gravelle considers himself an active minister and a 'fighter' for the North and stated that he looks forward to working with organizations like the Chamber in order to hear the concerns of businesses in the North so that we can all work together to build on our strengths and proactively deal with our challenges.

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