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Archived - 2014 Mandate letter: Northern Development and Mines

Premier's instructions to the Minister on priorities for the year 2014



September 25, 2014

The Honourable Michael Gravelle
Minister of Northern Development and Mines
Ministry of Northern Development and Mines
99 Wellesley Street West
Room 5630, Whitney Block
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1W3

Dear Minister Gravelle:

I am honoured to welcome you back to your role as Minister of Northern Development and Mines. We have a strong Cabinet in place, and I am confident that together we will build Ontario up, create new opportunities and champion a secure future for people across our province. The people of Ontario have entrusted their government to be a force for good, and we will reward that trust by working every day in the best interests of every person in this province.

As we implement a balanced and comprehensive plan for Ontario, we will lead from the activist centre. We will place emphasis on partnerships with businesses, communities and people to help foster continued economic growth and make a positive impact on the lives of every Ontarian. This collaborative approach will shape all the

work we do. It will ensure we engage people on the issues that matter the most to them, and that we implement meaningful solutions to our shared challenges.

Our government's most recent Speech from the Throne outlined a number of key priorities that will guide your work as minister. Growing the economy and helping to create good jobs are fundamental to building more opportunity and security, now and in the future. That critical priority is supported by strategic investments in the talent and skills of our people, from childhood to retirement. It is supported through the building of modern infrastructure, transit and a seamless transportation network. It is supported by a dynamic business climate that thrives on innovation, creativity and partnerships to foster greater prosperity. And it is reflected across all of our government, in every area, and will extensively inform our programs and policies.

As we move forward with our plan to grow the economy and create jobs, we will do so through the lens of fiscal prudence. Our 2014 Budget reinforces our commitment to balancing the budget by 2017-18; it is essential that every area adheres to the program-spending objectives established in it. We will choose to invest wisely in initiatives that strengthen Ontario's competitive advantage, create jobs and provide vital public services to our families. The President of the Treasury Board, collaborating with the Minister of Finance, will work closely with you and your fellow Cabinet members to ensure that our government meets its fiscal targets. The President of the Treasury Board will also lead the government's efforts on accountability, openness and modernization as we implement new accountability measures across government.

As Minister of Northern Development and Mines, you will continue to support strong, prosperous northern communities. You will work to increase the competitiveness of business and industry, foster innovation and entrepreneurial prospects — and create new jobs in the North. Your goal is to ensure that the North continues to realize its potential as a sustainable, diverse, stable, innovative region that significantly contributes to the overall growth of Ontario's economy.

Your ministry's specific priorities include:

Developing the Ring of Fire

- Co-ordinating and leading the development of the Ring of Fire to create opportunities in Northern Ontario's resource and mineral sector. Your goal is to maximize economic and social opportunities for Ontario, First Nations and Canada.
- Continuing to collaborate directly with other ministers, First Nations and key stakeholders to develop the Ring of Fire. You will establish a Ring of Fire development corporation within 60 days of the Speech from the Throne. The development corporation will be responsible for constructing, financing, operating and maintaining infrastructure to support access to strategic resources in the Ring of Fire. I ask that the corporation bring together private and public partners — including key mining companies and First Nations.
- Working with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Matawa First Nation communities and other ministers on the next phase of negotiations under the Ring of Fire Regional Framework Agreement, which our government signed earlier this year.
- Continuing to work with the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry on decisions relating to environmental assessments, cumulative and regional environmental impacts — and long-term monitoring in the Ring of Fire.

Promoting Ontario's Mining Sector

- Continuing to work with the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure to promote Ontario's mining sector, including the development of international opportunities.
- Continuing to encourage and enhance the capacity for Aboriginal communities to participate in — and take advantage of — mineral resources and other economic development opportunities.

Transforming the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission

- Moving forward with a balanced approach to transforming the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTTC) to ensure sustainable employment, continued economic growth and a strong transportation network in Northern Ontario. I ask that you maintain our government's commitment to keep in public hands the remaining ONTTC business lines (motor coach, Polar Bear Express, rail freight and refurbishment services) — vital transportation services and infrastructure that support economic growth in the North.
- Supporting the ONTTC through new investments. These include improving the service and accessibility of motor coach services and refurbishing passenger rail coaches for use on the Polar Bear Express. This will sustain jobs and ensure that vital service between Cochrane and Moosonee can be delivered more effectively and efficiently.

Driving Growth in Northern Ontario

- Continuing to drive the implementation of the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario. You will consult with the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure and work with partner ministries, municipalities, Aboriginal communities and key stakeholders. Your goal is to ensure that priorities for the North align with the objectives of the Growth Plan.
- Continuing to work with the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation. Together, you will work to create jobs, improve productivity, promote diversification in the region's economy — and stimulate innovation, entrepreneurship and business development investments in the North.
- Leading our government's efforts to integrate and co-ordinate northern policy and planning activities, informed by the Growth Plan.
- Conducting a five-year review of the Growth Plan in 2016 to assess progress and achievements to date.

Supporting a Dynamic Business Climate in the North

- Continuing to support the Minister of Transportation in developing a Multi-Modal Transportation Strategy in the North. Your goal is to support a more integrated transportation infrastructure system for air, rail, road and water.

We have an ambitious agenda for the next four years. I know that, by working together in partnership, we can be successful. The above list of priority initiatives is not meant to be exhaustive, as there are many other responsibilities that you and your ministry will need to carry out. To that end, this mandate letter is to be used by your ministry to develop more detailed plans for implementation of the initiatives above, in addition to other initiatives not highlighted in this letter.

I ask that you continue to build on the strong relationships we have with the Ontario Public Service, the broader public sector, other levels of government, and the private, non-profit and voluntary sectors. We want to be the most open and transparent government in the country. We want to be a government that works for the people of this province — and with them. It is of the utmost importance that we lead responsibly, act with integrity, manage spending wisely and are accountable for every action we take.

I look forward to working together with you in building opportunity today, and securing the future for all Ontarians.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Wynne
Premier

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