

For Immediate Release

Northern Ontario Hill Days: NOMA and FONOM Bring a Unified Northern Voice to Ottawa

Thunder Bay, ON / North Bay, ON — December 3, 2025 — The Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) and the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) have concluded two highly productive days of meetings on Parliament Hill as part of **Northern Ontario Hill Days**, a coordinated advocacy mission that brought municipal leaders directly to federal decision-makers to advance the priorities of Northern communities.

Over the two-day mission, representatives from NOMA and FONOM met with **MPs from all parties, Cabinet Ministers, Opposition Leaders, and senior federal officials**, underscoring a shared message: **supporting the North is essential to strengthening Canada's economy, infrastructure, and communities.**

High-Impact Meetings Across Parliament Hill

Throughout the mission, the delegation engaged in focused discussions with:

- **Staff from the Leader of the Official Opposition**
- **MP Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay–Rainy River)**
- **MP Pauline Rochfort (Nipissing–Timiskaming)**
- **Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne**
- **Minister Patty Hajdu**
- **Minister Mélanie Joly**
- **Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Housing Jennifer McKelvie**
- **Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration Peter Fragiskatos**
- **Housing Critic Scott Aitchison (CPC)**
- **MP Eric Melillo (Kenora / Kiiwetinoong - CPC)**
- **Senior staff in the Prime Minister's Office**

These discussions centred on the urgent needs of Northern communities and the unique role the region plays in national economic growth, resource development, supply chain reliability, and community safety.

Advancing Key Priorities for Northern Communities

NOMA and FONOM presented a coordinated set of priorities, including:

▪ **Strengthening the Trans-Canada Highway System**

Northern Ontario is home to the most vulnerable stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway. The delegation called for federal investment in 2+1 highway models, redundancy around critical pinch points, and long-term resilience planning to ensure the continuity of Canada's national supply chain.

▪ **Addressing Labour Shortages Through Tailored Immigration Pathways**

Municipal leaders emphasized that severe labour shortages are slowing growth across essential services, small businesses, and major industrial projects. The delegation pressed for rural- and Northern-specific immigration solutions to attract and retain workers and to support regional post-secondary institutions facing enrolment pressures.

▪ **Community Safety and Meaningful Bail Reform**

Delegates urged the federal government to take decisive action on chronic reoffending, improve accountability within the bail system, and support measures that restore safety and confidence in Northern communities.

▪ **Unlocking Economic Growth and Critical Minerals Development**

NOMA and FONOM highlighted the global significance of Northern Ontario's critical mineral potential and called for accelerated permitting, strategic infrastructure investments, and continued support for Indigenous-led partnerships.

Quotes:

"Northern Ontario's highways are Canada's highways. The Trans-Canada corridor through our region is the most vulnerable stretch in the entire country, and without real federal investment in redundancy, expansion, and safety upgrades, the national supply chain remains at constant risk. At the same time, our communities are facing historic labour shortages across every sector. We made it clear in Ottawa that Northern Ontario is ready to grow, but we need the workers—and the safe, reliable transportation infrastructure—to support that growth."

— **Rick Dumas, President, Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA)**

"Municipalities across Northern Ontario are confronting a community safety crisis driven by chronic and repeat offenders, and we pressed the federal government for meaningful bail reform that protects victims, reinforces accountability, and ensures our communities can feel safe again. At the same time, labour shortages are holding back everything from small businesses to major resource projects. Northern Ontario needs a federal partner committed to real solutions on both fronts if we are going to thrive."

— **Dave Plourde, President, Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM)**

A Strong and Collaborative Presence

Northern Ontario Hill Days showcased unprecedented collaboration between the two regional associations, presenting a united and solutions-focused voice to federal leaders. Together, NOMA and FONOM affirmed that **a strong, growing Northern Ontario is foundational to building a strong and competitive Canada.**

Looking Ahead

NOMA and FONOM expressed their commitment to continuing this momentum through **annual federal engagement**, ensuring that the issues facing Northern communities remain front and centre in national discussions.

Both organizations also extended an invitation to federal leaders, stating that they **look forward to welcoming MPs, Ministers, and the Prime Minister** to their upcoming conferences to continue dialogue, strengthen relationships, and advance shared priorities for Northern Ontario.

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