

ENVIRONMENT

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2023



Chiefs of Ontario

468 Queen St. E., Suite 400

Phone: 1-(416)-597-1266

Fax: 1-(416)-597-8365

Toll-free: 1-877-517-6527



Kathleen Padulo

Director of Environment

Email: Kathleen.Padulo@coo.org

www.chiefs-of.ontario.org

MEET THE ENVIRONMENT DIRECTOR



Welcome to this edition of the Environment Quarterly Newsletter!

Shekoli,

Welcome to the spring 2023 edition of the Chiefs of Ontario's Environment Sector Newsletter. We have turned our clocks ahead and sprung forward into a new season. Spring flowers are emerging from the ground, robins have returned, ice is melting on the lakes and the weather is becoming warmer. I hope everyone enjoys the soon-to-come spring weather and embraces the new season as we continue working towards a sustainable environment for future generations.

In this quarterly newsletter, the Environment Sector will provide updates on files that focus on climate change, the Great Lakes, safe drinking water and wastewater legislation, new and emerging Natural Resources Canada files, and more.

The Environment Sector has seen an abundance of activity over the last few months, between hosting the Water Legislation Engagement sessions, coordinating Canada Ontario Agreement (COA) Executive Committee meetings, and attending environment symposiums and working-groups. As we begin to resume travel and in-person meetings, we are being provided with a great opportunity to re-connect with First Nation communities and colleagues that we work so closely with on these files.

I hope you enjoy the spring edition of the newsletter. In closing, I want to acknowledge the Environment Sector at the Chiefs of Ontario and the Chiefs Committee on Environment for their dedication and support on the environment files.

Should you have any questions, please contact Kathleen Padulo at Kathleen.Padulo@coo.org.

Kathleen Padulo
Chiefs of Ontario, Director of Environment

ENVIRONMENT TEAM AT CHIEFS OF ONTARIO



Ryan Bowie, Program Manager

Ryan Bowie's work is focused on the Great Lakes region and the policies and agreements that manage Great Lakes water quality and ecosystem health. He also works on the federal government's proposal for the Canada Water Agency. You can reach Ryan at Ryan.Bowie@coo.org



Lillian Trapper, Ontario Regional Climate Change Coordinator

Lillian Trapper is the Regional Climate Change Coordinator for the Chiefs of Ontario. Lillian works closely with the Assembly of First Nations on a myriad of climate and environment files. You can reach Lillian at Lillian.Trapper@coo.org.



Sally Gaikhezheyongai, Environment Coordinator

Sally Gaikhezheyongai is the Environment Coordinator for the Chiefs of Ontario's Environment Sector. Since 2010, Sally has worked to assist the Sector with their meetings. You can reach Sally at Sally.Gaikhezheyongai@coo.org.

CHIEFS COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

Grand Chief Benedict Abram (Environment Portfolio Holder)	Mohawk Council of Akwesasne
Grand Chief Alison Linklater	Mushkegowuk Council
Regional Deputy Grand Council Chief Mel Hardy	Anishinabek Nation (AN)
Chief Gladys Thompson	Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek (Rocky Bay) AN
Chief Alana Endanawas	Sheshegwaning First Nation AN
Chief Gerry Duquette Jr.	Dokis First Nation AN
Ogimaa Kwe Linda Debassige	M'Chigeeng First Nation AN
Chief Dean Sayers	Ojibways of Batchewana AIAI
Chief R. Don Maracle	Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte AIAI
Deputy Grand Chief Victor Linklater	Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN)
Chief Veronica Smith	Neyaashiinigmiing First Nation (Chippewas of Nawash Unceded) IFN
Chief Charles Sampson	Bkejwanong Territory (Walpole Island) IFN
Chief Stacey Laforme	Mississaugas of Credit First Nation Unaffiliated Independent First Nations
Chief Wilfred King	Kiashke Zaaging Anishinaabek (Gull Bay) Unaffiliated Independent First Nations

UPDATE ON ONGOING COO PROJECTS



Beaver house and dam, photo by Lillian Trapper

Canada Water Agency Engagement: Phase 2

The Chiefs-in-Assembly have supported Phase 2 engagement via resolution on First Nations' priorities in the creation of the Canada Water Agency (CWA). Phase 2 is expected to see the Environment Sector support workshops conducted in communities in conjunction with Provincial Territorial Organizations (PTOs) and Independent First Nations. The Environment Sector was not able to come to an agreement with Environment and Climate Change Canada on funding in time to carry out Phase 2 during the 2022-23 fiscal year, however, support is likely to be garnered throughout the 2023-24 fiscal year and moving forward.

The 2023 federal budget commits \$21 million to support the creation of the CWA, which will be headquartered in Winnipeg, MB. By the end of 2023, the federal government aims to introduce legislation that will fully establish the CWA as a standalone entity. This funding should support our Phase 2 engagement on CWA, as this will be crucial for First Nations' input before legislation is drafted.

WATER HIGHLIGHTS

Water Legislation Engagements hosted by the COO Environment Sector in March 2023

The Government of Canada provided a 30-day review period of proposed draft legislation on water and wastewater on-reserve. As a result, the Chiefs of Ontario Environment Sector organized two (2) consultation sessions that were attended by approximately 40 representatives from First Nations, Tribal Councils and PTOs. Below is a summary of the feedback and questions generated for ISC during these sessions.



Photo of Wanapitei Lake by Sally Gaikhezheyongai

What We Heard About the Engagement Process

Participants shared that they were concerned with the short timeline to provide feedback, although they did recognize that Canada's parliamentary process provides additional opportunities to propose friendly amendments to the legislation.

We also heard that participants would like more proactive engagement from the Government of Canada on the legislation. Not all participants had received information from ISC regarding online sessions, and many expressed interest in follow-up virtual meetings that would include government for further discussion. Participants recognized that ISC is the lead on the legislation but noted that they want to learn more about how other government departments see themselves as contributors to better water and wastewater outcomes in the implementation of the legislation.

What We Heard About the Legislation

Overall, we heard that the legislation is a good starting place to improve water and wastewater on-reserve. Participants mentioned their support for the 5-year review clause and appreciated the recognition of the role of women.

Notwithstanding, participants felt that greater clarity is required in the following areas:

- **Standards:** Participants recognized that the legislation designates a process for creating standards. They spoke to the need for standards to be rigorous. As all operate within Ontario and receive training in compliance with Ontario standards, these were seen as a potential model.
- **Accountability and Enforcement:** It is not clear in the current legislation who will be accountable for ensuring that First Nations have everything they need to meet water and wastewater standards, nor is it clear what will happen if the conditions for success are not met. Participants want to understand how the legislation will be enforced and who will be held accountable.
- **Liability:** Participants sought greater clarity and certainty on liability. Participants felt that the current language seemed to create a void in accountability and that it could release all parties from liability.
- **Funding:** Participants spoke to the need for Canada to provide clear, predictable, transparent and adequate funding. We heard that the Levels of Service Standards used by Canada are inadequate for determining funding and that they should be replaced by a long-term, asset-focused funding formula tied to meeting rigorous standards.
- **Systems Approach:** Participants discussed the connection between water and wastewater, housing plans and fire suppression requirements. We heard that participants want to understand how the legislation could result in Canada aligning infrastructure asset plans and taking a long-term approach to water and wastewater infrastructure, resulting in it aligning with future housing plans and fire safety needs. Participants also spoke to the need for the legislation to contemplate insurance and to get clarity as to whether the legislation could impact insurance policies.
- **Procurement:** Participants spoke to ongoing procurement issues with the Government of Canada, in particular a “race to the bottom” to secure the cheapest suppliers – who sometimes underperform or end up being more expensive in the long term. We heard that participants want procurement reforms to come along with the legislation so that suppliers are chosen based on best outcomes rather than the lowest price.
- **Defining Good Faith/Consultation:** Participants spoke to the need for there to be a clearer definition of “good faith” and “consultation,” with ties back to human rights standards and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) Act.
- **Governance:** Participants were seeking greater certainty as to how the legislation would work vis-a-vis the Canada Water Authority. Participants also inquired as to how a First Nations water commission or a similar institution could work and spoke to their expectation that First Nations would be an integral part of decision making on a government-to-government basis.

- **Source Water Protection:** Participants spoke to the fact that water sources extend beyond reserve boundaries, and often, the decisions of other jurisdictions will impact source water. We heard that First Nations need to be able to have a seat at the table with all levels of governments when making decisions on matters that could impact source water, and that they expect funds to enable them to protect source water.
- **Interjurisdictional Concerns:** Participants spoke to Ontario's role in water permitting and in permitting industrial or waste-generating activities in watersheds. We heard that Ontario should be engaged, and that First Nations will need to understand how the legislation could impact permitting processes.
- **Whole-of-Government Approach:** Participants spoke to the role of other government departments in water and wastewater, in particular, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Health Canada. We heard that participants want to understand how other departments will play a role in the legislation and how it will enable a whole-of-government approach.

Key Questions Generated During the Engagement Sessions

During the engagement sessions, participants generated the following key questions for ISC to take into consideration and provide input and insight upon:

- How will the government work with First Nations in a way that is aligned with *UNDRIP* legislation, is robust, is consent-based, and takes into consideration decisions that can be made through orders in council?
- How will the federal government coordinate with provincial governments and First Nations to enable source water protection?
- Does the federal government recognize that funding requirements extend to and need to consider the following:
 - Operations and maintenance; training; pay equity for water operators; source water protection measures; engineering assessments; future housing plans; and fire safety needs?
- What might a First Nations Water Authority do or be responsible for, and how would its members be selected?
- How will the legislation align with Treaty and human rights?
- How will the federal government enforce the legislation? From Canada's point of view, what accountabilities and liabilities rest with whom?
- How and when will the legislation come into effect?
- What policies does the federal government believe will need to be created or amended to implement the legislation once it is passed?
- Will the legislation result in changes to procurement policies or practices?
- Has the federal government assessed potential risks that the legislation might create for insurance policies or have they otherwise liaised with insurance companies? If it has assessed risks, what are those risks?

Ongoing and Future Work from the COO Environment Sector:

Attendees at these engagement sessions were interested in a question-and-answer online seminar with ISC Headquarters to learn more about the legislation and explore questions regarding its contents and implementation. Participants asked that these sessions have a clear agenda, that they are facilitated by a third party, and that they are not reliant on PowerPoint presentations. Chiefs of Ontario will be requesting a meeting with ISC HQ staff.

A Recent Update from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC):

Since 2018, the Government of Canada has been engaging with First Nations and First Nations organizations on legislative reform related to safe drinking water. On Friday, February 17, 2023, a consultation draft of a legislative proposal for First Nations drinking water and wastewater was shared broadly with First Nation rights-holders and First Nation organizations for feedback by Sunday, March 19, 2023.

*Minister of Indigenous Services, Patty Hajdu, heard clearly from First Nations that they needed additional time to engage on the consultation draft. In support of this feedback received from First Nation partners, Minister Hajdu is extending the engagement period on the consultation draft by an additional 35 days to **April 23, 2023** to help ensure meaningful engagement.*

The consultation draft can also be accessed [online](#).

The Government of Canada is committed to advancing new legislation following the repeal of the 2013 Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act and the commitments made in the 2021 Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Class Action Settlement.

Individual or group engagement sessions to discuss the consultation draft can be set up by contacting proprepnh2o-cleanfnh2o@sac-isc.gc.ca. You may also contact the Minister of Indigenous Services directly at ministresa-ministeris@sac-isc.gc.ca. Minister Hajdu would be pleased to meet should that be requested.

[Virtual drop-in sessions](#) are also available Monday to Friday until April 21, 2023, at the following times:

- Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays: 1:00 - 2:00 PM (Eastern Time)*
- Thursdays and Fridays: 12:00 - 1:00 PM (Eastern Time)*

Meeting ID: 279 168 855 916

Passcode: Ccrk9N

If you are experiencing technical difficulties accessing the link, please contact proprepnh2o-cleanfnh2o@sac-isc.gc.ca.

The Government of Canada is committed to ongoing engagement with First Nations and First Nation organizations as work progresses on the development, introduction and implementation of new proposed First Nations drinking water and wastewater legislation.

Best regards,

Legislation, Engagement and Regulations Directorate at Indigenous Services Canada

Great Lakes Executive Committee (GLEC) Meeting December 7, 2022

The winter GLEC meeting was once again a half-day event hosted in a virtual setting. Rather than organized primarily around Annex specific updates, the agenda focused on broader level discussions reflecting on the Great Lakes Public Forum and the final draft of the 2023-2025 Binational Priorities for Science and Action, as well as presentations from the Nutrients Annex and Groundwater Annex Co-Leads. A significant upfront announcement from Chris Korleski of the US Environmental Protection Agency was the recommendation from the GLEC and Chemicals of Mutual Concern (CMC) Co-Chairs for consideration of Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) as a CMC and move to Phase II in the review process. The Chairs are asking for a recommendation from the Annex leads by June 2024.

As for reflections on the Great Lakes Public Forum, it was noted that there were over 750 attendees in-person and online, and that the event was much strengthened by the involvement of Indigenous peoples throughout the program. One of the main takeaways, as mentioned by Canadian Co-Chair Mike Goffin from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), was the need to build on Indigenous engagement and participation. The funding disparity for the Great Lakes between the United States and Canada was also noted, with Mike Goffin recognizing that the Canadian federal government “owe a funding announcement”, and that something of this magnitude was in the works. The COO Environment Sector has been pressing the federal government to significantly increase their investment in the Great Lakes, and Ontario Regional Chief Glen Hare wrote to Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland about this issue as well. The commitment by Prime Minister Trudeau during President Biden’s recent visit of \$420 million for Great Lakes clean up and restoration is likely the funding announcement referred to by Goffin.

Discussion of the final draft of the 2023-2025 Binational Priorities for Science and Action did raise the need to deepen the understanding and use of Traditional Ecological Knowledge throughout the Annexes of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. This is identified in the Science Annex, as well as the need to update the guidance document (which is US-based) and to explore educational opportunities. The Final Priorities are now posted and can be found [online](#).

The Nutrients Annex Co-Leads presented on Lake Ontario phosphorous reduction targets, and the Groundwater Leads presented on findings from their *Groundwater Science Relevant to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement Report*, that will require GLEC review before it is released. A final announcement was that Habitat and Species Annex Co-Lead Gavin Christie from Fisheries and Oceans Canada is retiring. The next meeting in June will return to an in-person hybrid event, which will take place in Chicago, IL. The winter meeting will be hosted in Toronto, ON in December 2023.

Assembly of First Nations 6th Annual Water Symposium and Trade Show

February 7-9, 2023

Calgary, Alberta

The Assembly of First Nations' (AFN) 6th Annual Water Symposium returned to an in-person event, held in in Calgary, AB, with the theme *Securing Safe Water for All First Nations*. Focused on addressing important water-related issues facing First Nations, the event consisted of presentations and workshops, with a concurrent trade show showcasing water and infrastructure related products. There were also operator training courses for continuing education credits offered during the Symposium.

The Opening Ceremonies and welcome from Chief Troy Knowlton of Piikani Nation were followed by opening remarks from Manitoba Regional Chief Cindy Woodhouse, and Ontario Regional Chief Glen Hare, who provided a video message. Both discussed the critical importance of providing safe, clean and reliable water for First Nations. The context for the Symposium was then set by Irving Leblanc, Director of Infrastructure and Safe Drinking Water for the AFN, and Dr. Kerry Black from the University of Calgary, who discussed the long road to repeal and replace the *Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act* with new legislation co-developed with First Nations. The Symposium was the last national level event to discuss the replacement legislation prior to undertaking consultations the *Proposal for an Act respecting drinking water, wastewater and related infrastructure on First Nations lands* (see detailed discussion).

Highlights of the event included a keynote presentation by representatives of the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority, which is the first Indigenous water authority in Canada. Presenters described the challenges, opportunities, and considerations in implementing a water authority that provided insights for other First Nations considering similar models. More information can be found on the [AFNWA website](#).

Day 2's keynote presentation was made by Aimée Craft, who is an Associate Professor at the University of Ottawa, and the Research Chair for *Nibi miinawaa aki inaakonigewin: Indigenous governance in relationship with land and water*. She discussed the Nibi Declaration of Treaty #3 that asserts that water is alive and has a spirit, the impacts of hydro development, and effort to recognize the personhood of Lake Winnipeg. Day 2 concluded with a panel on *First Nations Roles in Protecting Water* with Judy Wilson from the Neskonlith Band, and Dr. Myrle Ballard from Lake St Martin First Nation who is currently the first Director of Indigenous Science for Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Day 3 opened with an address from Indigenous Services Canada Minister Patti Hajdu, followed by a question and answer period. Minister Hajdu spoke to the co-development process for the replacement water legislation, noting that this process will inform how other departments engage First Nations on legislation in the future. The Symposium closed with a panel discussion on moving forward with the new water and wastewater legislation. In addition

to the plenary events, workshops on 20 various subjects related to governing and delivering effective water and wastewater services on First Nations contributed to a successful and engaging event.



Floor Map of the Great Lakes Region by the Biinaagami Project

Annual Canada Ontario Agreement Executive and First Nations Meeting March 8, 2023 Toronto, Ontario

The 7th Annual First Nations and Canada-Ontario Agreement (COA) Executive Committee Meeting returned to an in-person format on March 8, 2023, in Toronto, ON. The COA on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health is the federal-provincial agreement that supports the restoration and protection of the Great Lakes basin ecosystem, and also contains specific commitments to First Nations.

Chaired by Clint Jacobs and Naomi Williams from Walpole Island First Nation, the meeting provided a fruitful forum to discuss the successes and challenges of implementing commitments to First Nations in the COA. In addition to presentations by the COO Environment Sector, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), and the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP), Jacobs and Williams also presented to the forum. Williams discussed a Walpole Island First Nation study examining fish tumors in Brown Bullheads. This study, following community protocols, provided necessary research to lift the Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI) for fish tumors in the St. Clair River area of concern. Jacobs' presentation focused on the need to balance the work of monitoring and data gathering with practicing First Nations culture. Both highlighted the integral need for First Nations practices, knowledge and relationships to addressing the health of the Great Lakes region.

The meeting also showcased the Biinaagami Project, led by Canadian Geographic and Swim Drink Fish who have worked closely with Indigenous leaders, knowledge keepers and language speakers from the Great Lakes watershed to advocate for cultural and ecological sustainability. Their interactive lunchtime presentation had attendees peruse over an enlarged floor map of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence watershed that outlined all of the Indigenous languages and territories in the different regions of the watershed.

A significant outcome of the meeting was an agreement among First Nations, Canada and Ontario representatives to pursue co-developing tools that support better reporting on commitments to First Nations that stem from the COA. Incorporating progress on recommendations put forth by First Nations – in particular, recommendations from last year's First Nations Priority Setting meeting hosted by the COO – will also be a component of improved reporting

A full summary of the meeting will be made available in the future.

NEW AND EMERGING ISSUES

Ontario Regional Energy and Resource Table

The Federal Budget (Regional Strategic Initiatives) 2022 included \$25 million to launch the Regional Energy and Resource Tables to work with provinces, territories and Indigenous partners to advance regional economic growth opportunities, accelerate energy transformation priorities and create sustainable jobs.

The Regional Energy and Resource Tables will build on work done by the Industry Strategy Council, which brings business leaders together to offer experienced perspectives from key sectors of our economy and to engage with a diverse set of businesses and stakeholders across Canada, including labour and Indigenous Peoples. In its 2020 report, titled “[Restart, recover, and reimagine prosperity for all Canadians](#),” the Industry Strategy Council provided the following recommendations:

- Support all natural resource sectors in becoming global environmental and, social governance suppliers, as well as product innovators.
- Leverage clean technology strengths to accelerate exports and domestic adoption and to decarbonize key industrial sectors.
- Incentivize all sectors to meet commitments outlined in the Paris Agreement with a cost and time-optimal decarbonization pathway.

With the addition of Ontario government, a total of nine provinces and territories are now participating in the Regional Energy and Resource Tables. British Columbia, Manitoba and Newfoundland and Labrador helped launch the tables [on June 1, 2022](#), and New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon joined on [October 13, 2022](#). The federal government is setting up these tables with the goal of establishing them among all 13 provinces and territories by early 2023.

In the coming months, the Government of Canada will announce the details of the Pan-Canadian Grid Council, a technical advisory group with a mandate to remove existing barriers to provide clean electricity to every region of Canada by 2035. The Council will feed into the Regional Energy and Resource Tables process.

The Government of Canada’s [2030 Emissions Reduction Plan: Canada’s Next Steps for Clean Air and a Strong Economy](#) is a detailed plan that lays out an achievable sector-by-sector path toward Canada’s emissions reduction target of 40 to 45 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030, and net-zero emissions by 2050.

On December 13, 2022, the Leadership Council invited Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) to present an update on the Regional Energy and Resource Tables. The Regional Energy and Resource Tables are being established in each province and territory to:

- Build federal-provincial collaboration and Indigenous partnerships to advance and accelerate Canada's economic growth and energy transformation.
- Engage key partners around growth opportunities and in actions to support them, with a view to inform the development of place-based economic transformation strategies.

NRCan's objectives include aligning resources, timelines and regulatory approaches as part of an economic strategy to capitalize on key regional opportunities and priorities.

NRCan is seeking the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives as a critical component to the success of Regional Tables. They currently have five actions in the process:

Step 0: Launch Regional Tables

Step 1: Tailor an Approach to Indigenous Engagement

Step 2: Confirm Opportunity Areas

Step 3: Develop Initial Action Areas

Step 4: Shape a Place-Based Economic Strategy

Canada and Ontario have identified five possible opportunity areas:

1. Growing Ontario's clean and affordable electricity grid;
2. Developing critical mineral value chains;
3. Leadership in nuclear technology deployment;
4. Accelerating clean hydrogen opportunities, and;
5. Advancing a sustainable and innovative forestry sector.

Short-Term Objectives

- Lay a foundation for initial dialogue on developing a place-based economic transformation strategy.
- Build partnerships around specific opportunity areas.
- Engagement with Indigenous groups and targeted experts and stakeholders will continue to affect the content throughout the process.

Long-Term Objectives

- Define region-specific transformative pathways and interventions to building a net-zero economy.
- Lay the foundation for strategic partnerships and organized alliances.
- Promote Canadian value chains by leveraging regional strengths and facilitating connections.
- Build consensus on regionally significant priorities and projects.
- Include plans to support sustainable jobs, linked to regional growth opportunities.

The following analyses have been conducted by the Environment Sector in relation to this issue:

1. Canada is seeking certainty in the Energy Sector to give confidence to investors and make progress through a shared lens of economic growth, job creation, and competitiveness in the context of the global transition to a low-carbon economy.
2. 52 per cent of First Nations on-reserve are in severe poverty.
3. First Nations have abundant natural resources, and Canada must work with First Nations towards reconciliation on this matter.

On January 24, 2023, the Chiefs Committee on Environment, the Chiefs Committee on Economic Development, and NRCan met in Ottawa, ON to further understand the potential opportunities for First Nations, as well as Canada's and Ontario's objectives pertaining to the development of the Regional Energy and Resource Tables across Canada.

Please note that this was an information session, and no decisions were made in this meeting.

The Environment Sector declared the following recommendations pertaining to the Regional Energy and Resource Tables:

- The Chiefs must make a decision on the representation of First Nations at the Ontario Regional Energy Resource Table.
- The Chiefs must make a decision on the priorities and focus areas for this table.

For more information or questions pertaining to NRCan, please contact:

Craig Carey, Director General Partnerships & Engagement Branch
Nòkwewashk, Natural Resources Canada
craig.carey@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca

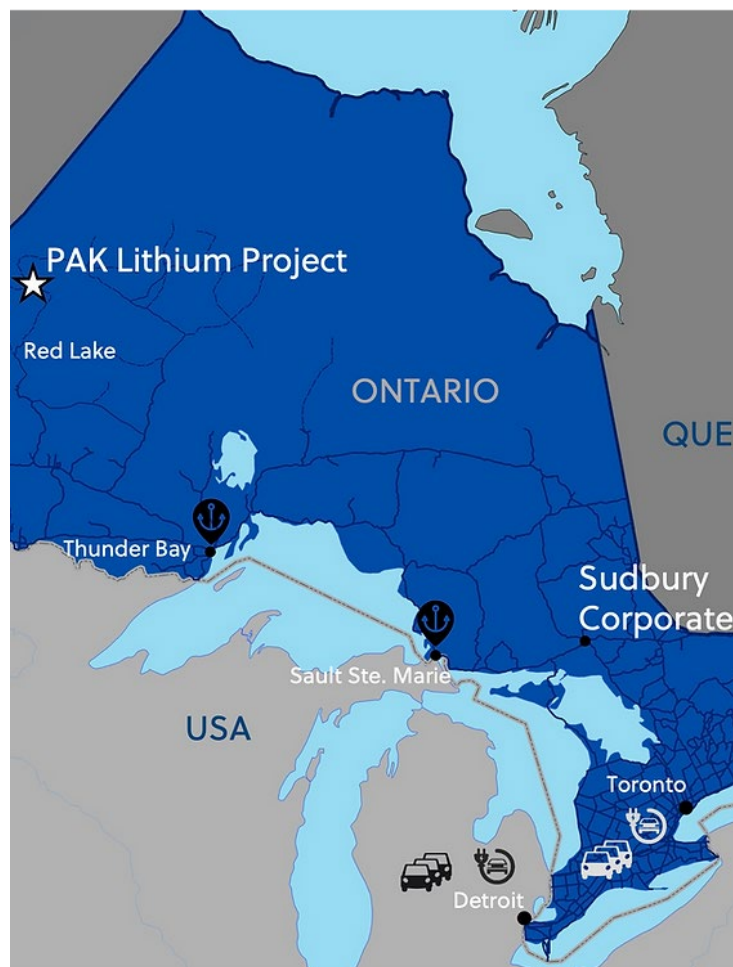
Nishu Gulati, Director Partnerships & Engagement Branch
Nòkwewashk, Natural Resources Canada
nishu.gulati@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca

CLIMATE CHANGE HIGHLIGHTS

COO Climate Action

The Chiefs of Ontario recently partnered with EcoTrust Canada to develop capacity for engagement on the entire carbon landscape from chemical element, to greenhouse gas emissions, to environmental conservation, to economic benefits from carbon. This initiative is part of the implementation of COO Resolution, *First Nations Climate Leadership on Energy*.

Canada, in its effort to combat climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, plans to move from gas to electric vehicles (EV) elevating lithium exploration across the country. The high demand for lithium for the growing battery market has Frontier Lithium developing the PAK Lithium Project in Northwestern Ontario, approximately 175 km north of Red Lake.



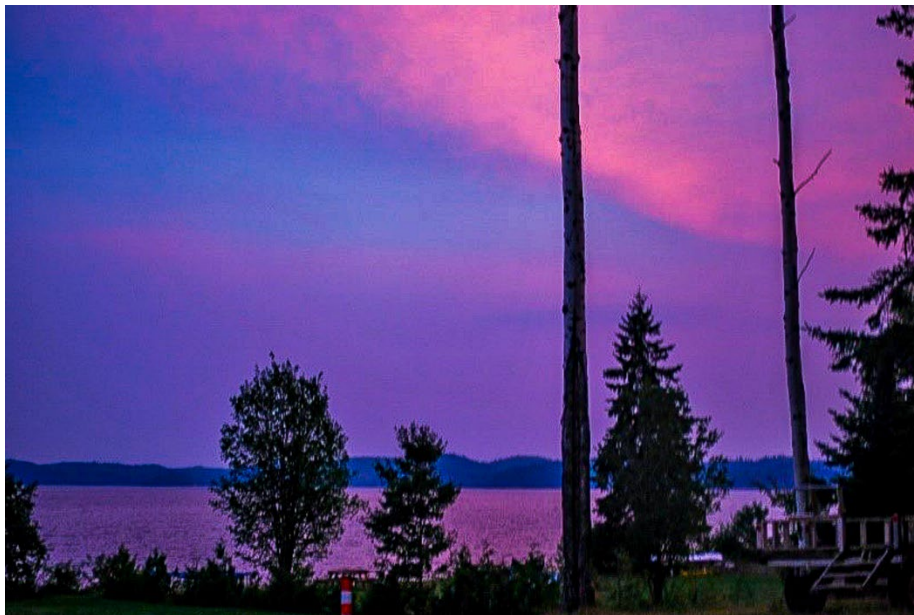
Source: <https://www.frontierlithium.com/lithium>

AFN Climate Action:

A delegate from the AFN attended the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP 27) in Egypt in November 2022, an international conference on climate change. [An AFN position paper](#) was developed with recommendations to lead a discussion for Indigenous participation. A summary of the position paper can also be found [online](#).

Joint Committee on Climate Actions (JCCA):

The JCCA, made up of federal government and AFN representatives, including First Nations regional representatives, will be releasing its 2022 Annual Report this spring 2023 and announcing a new website that will be available on the AFN website in the fall 2023 season. This committee has reached its 5th year of existence and will be undergoing a review of its efforts, challenges and achievements.



Upcoming Events and Meetings:

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Special Chiefs Assembly (SCA), will be held on April 3-6, 2023, in Ottawa, ON. This SCA is meant to discuss the development of a National Action Plan regarding Canada's UNDRIP Act and to work through approximately 50 outstanding draft resolutions from the Annual Chiefs Assembly held in July 2022 in Vancouver, BC. More information on the upcoming AFN SCA can be found [here](#):

FURTHER INFORMATION OF INTEREST

The COO Environment Sector has developed the following non-exhaustive list of potential resources containing environment-related information that may be of interest to readers:

- [UN CC:Learn Program](#): The UN CC:Learn Program provides a number of online courses to develop knowledge and skills to take action on climate change. This program contributes to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 13 Climate Action.
- [Ontario Government News Release, March 2, 2023](#): This release details the Ford government's plans to amend the Mining Act to "attract more investment in the province's mining sector while strengthening the made-in-Ontario critical minerals supply chains for batteries, electric vehicles, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals and other advanced manufacturing technologies."
- [Mining Watch Article, March 7, 2023](#): This article, titled "More, Worse Mining: Ontario's Proposed Building More Mines Act," details the amendments to be made to the Ontario legislation to "reduce administrative burden".
- MacDonald-Laurier Institute held a [webinar](#) on March 9, 2023, titled "*Finding a good fit: Indigenous peoples and small modular reactors.*"
- [Approvals process for metal mines impoundment areas from the Government of Canada, on December 15, 2022](#): Environment Climate Change Canada (ECCC) contacted AFN regarding its amendments on Streamlining the Approvals Process for Metal Mines with Tailings Impoundment Areas regulatory process. It streamlines the "Governor in Council decisions for authorizing the use of natural water bodies...to dispose of mine waste by a metal mine."