



Bingwi Neyaashi
Anishinaabek



DRAFT - Media Release

Northern Leaders Support Ontario's Historic Investments into Caribou Conservation

March 15, 2023 – Today, First Nations and northern leaders collectively representing over 350 Ontario communities, 540,000 unionized employees across the country, over 40 First Nation communities, and 49 forest product and management companies joined Minister Piccini in Thunder Bay as he announced a \$29 million investment into caribou conservation measures by the Ford Government.

“We are very supportive of today’s announcement and appreciate Minister Piccini’s desire to speak with stakeholders and First Nations. This historic investment builds on Ontario’s long history of caribou management and protection,” stated Mayor Wendy Landry of Shuniah, and President of the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA). “We are, however, watching what is happening in Quebec and have great concerns about Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) Minister Steven Guilbeault’s recommendation to order prohibitions within caribou habitat. The social, economic, and spiritual importance of accessing and using these lands cannot be overstated.”

President of the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) and Councillor of Temiskaming Shores, Danny Whalen, asked, “Ottawa signed a five-year agreement with Ontario for conserving boreal caribou just last year. Our communities expect Ottawa to meet its commitments, work with Ontario, and consult with municipalities on implementation. The livelihoods of thousands of workers and families are at stake.”

Regional Deputy Grand Council Chief Melvin Hardy of Anishinabek Nation and Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek stated, “Indigenous peoples have the right to determine strategies for using their lands. Minister Guilbeault needs to sit down and speak with our communities before taking any action on caribou.”

“The forest sector has played a critical role in our community for many years, including recent investments into our sawmill. We are proud of our accomplishments as a First Nations people,” said Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek (BNA) Chief Paul Gladu. “We applaud today’s announcement and expect to be consulted on all aspects of caribou conservation. We are informing the Federal Government that we will not accept Ottawa’s meddling or intervention.”

“Forestry has assisted Red Rock Indian Band in achieving economic self-reliance for many years. Our members, and the residents of our neighbouring communities, depend on the sustainability of our working forests and abundance of wildlife,” commented Red Rock Indian Band Chief Marcus Hardy.

Ian Dunn, President and CEO of the Ontario Forest Industries Association (OFIA), stated, “Society recognizes the benefits of a sustainable and circular forest bioeconomy. Given significant public investments into bio-energy production and critical minerals, we hope the Federal government will be supportive.” Mr. Dunn continued, “It is clear that Ontario wants to take a collaborative, science-based, and balanced approach. We fully support today’s historic announcement by Minister Piccini and the Ford Government.”

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