

# OPINION EDITORIAL STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cochrane, Ontario – June 11, 2013:

## STOP THE RHETORIC - PLEASE STAND UP FOR THE ONTC

In recent weeks the haste by which the Province has thrust one of our most important pieces of northern infrastructure, the ONTC, into peril has been exposed. Interestingly as well, the general failing of the current political system and representation in Northern Ontario, to in fact defend our interests, has also been exposed. Questions have surfaced around how the advice of the government to the Minister to actually not approach divestment as the only option at the beginning were outright ignored, to the true costs of the fire sale now being understood to be over a staggering \$790 million. More concerning is the government knew all this and still forced the issue in the backrooms of Queens Park regardless, allowing no consultation with those of us who will again pay the price for the seemingly lack of value Queens Park puts on our existence.

In response to the documentation being made public by North Bay M.P.P. Vic Fedeli, current Minister Gravelle chastised Fedeli for focussing on providing the important insight and for supposedly not working on solutions. I find Minister Gravelle's statement not only curious considering the province refused to include anyone in the divestment discussions and refused to entertain the many solutions being offered while they doggedly forced the issue through, but indicative of the all too familiar wordsmithing and optics management we get here, while our beds are being lit on fire and left to burn around us. Vic Fedeli is right for exposing the information and allowing northerners to make informed decisions. At least one of our M.P.P.'s has actually stood up for the upwards of 4,000 families in our region who have been irresponsibly hung out to dry through another hastily conceived northern sacrifice. Minister Gravelle speaks to a "new" approach and how divestment all of a sudden "may" not be the only option and how a committee has finally been struck to look at solutions. The fact is, if Minister Gravelle and the government were serious about there suddenly being "other options" to divestment, then why are they refusing to stop the process completely while we explore these other options? My sources tell me that while discussions are better, divestment is still moving ahead and there really isn't much to report differently at this point.

As a Mayor, I have grown fatigued over the politicking of words and optics while our region and families continue to be sacrificed, slashed and burned to pay for the increased cost and resulting deficits of appeasing voting interests in other jurisdictions. Our own NDP MPP's had all the control both last year and this year to force a stoppage to this unnecessary northern sacrifice and curiously "chose" not to. Shouldn't our northern MPP's have at least stood up and said no instead of continuing to support those who clearly don't have our interests as a priority? While I appreciate Minister Gravelle's northern roots and respect the man himself, I encourage the Minister to see the need to get passed the usual optics and political speak. Northern Ontario is on a slippery slope to no where and we need our ministers to take charge and actually "govern". To make the decisions, which includes the unpopular ones, that provide the leadership the population in the North needs so badly. As a Mayor and as a northerner I'm urging you to please stop the rhetoric and stand up for us, immediately stop the divestment process of the ONTC, truly get the appropriate leaders involved, not just the ones you hope share your opinion, and give us hope once and for all that northerners do matter.

### Contact:

Cochrane Mayor Peter Politis – 705-272-9527;  
[peter.politis@cochraneontario.com](mailto:peter.politis@cochraneontario.com)

