



Communiqué

Northern Premiers Promote Infrastructure as Key to Northern Investment

June 16, 2015—Northern Premiers' Forum

Premier Peter Taptuna, Premier Robert McLeod and Premier Darrell Pasloski met today in Kugluktuk, Nunavut where they discussed shared priorities and continued cooperation in building a better North. At the top of the agenda was territorial infrastructure, which is a key pillar of the Premiers' joint document, *A Northern Vision*, and recognized by the three territories as a foundation of strong communities and resilient economies.

While all jurisdictions are facing the costs of aging infrastructure, governments in the North are working to develop infrastructure such as port facilities, airports, highways, housing and energy to support economic drivers including post-secondary education, resource extracting industries, training, science and technology. Premiers agreed on the need for ongoing investment in key infrastructure in the territories to aid economic development and to ensure community access to markets and government services.

In addition, Premiers discussed a range of priorities and areas of collaboration under the following themes.

- Climate change—the Premiers acknowledged the significant investments all three territories continue to make in climate change adaptation and emissions reduction, including cleaner energy production, and technology and innovation.
- Energy—the Premiers emphasized the strong economic potential for the energy resources industry in the territories and look forward to discussing the Canadian Energy Strategy at the meeting of Canada's Premiers in July in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Northern science—the Premiers recognized the importance of science to the achievement of northern aspirations and have committed to develop a pan-territorial approach to science.

Also at the meeting, Premiers reiterated the importance of work by provinces and territories to ensure that fewer Aboriginal children become part of the child welfare system. Premiers also discussed work at a territorial and pan-Canadian level to end violence against Indigenous women and girls.

Congratulating Minister Aglukkaq on the accomplishments of the Canadian chairmanship of the Arctic Council, Premiers committed to working together to ensure that northern residents' interests are reflected in the Arctic Council's work under the U.S. chairmanship, and to continuing to explore opportunities to work with Canada, the Permanent Participants and circumpolar neighbours.

Backgrounder

June 16, 2015—Northern Premiers' Forum

Infrastructure and *Canadian Transportation Act* Review

Premiers recognized the importance of addressing the significant and unique infrastructure deficits faced by communities in the territories and how this deficit affects these communities' access to markets and government programs and services. Federal funding provided through the Building Canada Plan and other sources has enabled significant progress on upgrades and improvements to community and transportation infrastructure in the North.

Premiers continue support to fairness through a 'base-plus per capita' cost funding model.

Premiers also noted that the *Canadian Transportation Act* Review Panel recently visited the three territories. They were encouraged by the panel's intention to address rapid changes in the North and associated challenges for the continued safety, security and sustainability of the northern transportation system. Specifically, Premiers noted the federal role in supporting the northern transportation system.

Energy

Reliable and affordable energy is essential for economic development. High energy prices in the North drive up costs for both consumers and businesses and make it difficult for northern business to compete. The high cost of energy and the lack of strategic energy infrastructure also discourage investment and inhibit economic growth.

Premiers emphasized the strong economic potential for the energy resources industry in the territories. Premiers also discussed the importance of clean, reliable and reasonably-priced energy for northern citizens and economies.

Premiers committed to continuing to work together so that the North has the infrastructure it needs to ensure citizens have access to reliable and affordable energy systems.

Premiers noted they were looking forward to discussing the Canadian Energy Strategy at the meeting of Canada's Premiers in July in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. The strategy will enable provinces and territories to work together on their energy priorities and shared goals of ensuring Canada is a recognized leader in sustainable and secure energy production, supply and transportation.

Water

Abundant, clean water is essential for all northerners and key to the pursuit of traditional lifestyles. Premiers agreed to continued cooperation in ensuring the shared water resources of the territories remain healthy and sustainable.

Mine Training

Premiers continue to support and endorse their joint proposal to Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency for new funding to support a Pan-Territorial Framework for Industry Training, submitted by Yukon College, Aurora College and Nunavut Arctic College last fall.

Given increasing labour demands and shortages in the territories, particularly in resource industry sectors, the Premiers were pleased that the territorial colleges are working together, and with other partners, on training for northerners. They expressed their confidence that new funding to support this initiative will help to better position the territories for growth and prosperity, while at the same time helping Northerners to contribute to healthy communities and a prosperous future for all Canadians.

Northern Science

Science and technology help manage northern challenges and opportunities that include increasing demand for transportation and communications infrastructure increasing demand for education and training, increasing pressures on health and social services, and increasing pressures on land and resource management systems and housing and land availability.

Innovation can result in new opportunities and solutions, and is essential to continued growth, prosperity and competitiveness. Recognizing the importance of science to the achievement of northern aspirations, Premiers have directed officials to develop a pan-territorial approach to science that will:

- Identify high-level guiding principles for science within the three jurisdictions;
- Foster cooperation and collaboration across the territories;
- Identify science needs under each of the four pillars of *A Northern Vision*, as well as needs associated with implementation of the *Pan-territorial Adaptation Strategy* and the *Pan-territorial Renewable Energy Inventory*; and
- Recognize the importance and contribution of traditional knowledge to advancing the northern knowledge base and its value to decision-making.

Climate Change

Northern Premiers agreed to support ongoing collaboration among the territories, and with the provincial and the federal governments, in developing Canada's approach to addressing climate change in advance of the Paris United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21), November 30 – December 11, 2015.

Canada's territories have a minor impact on overall greenhouse gas emissions but climate change has had a significant effect on northern communities. Approaches in the North to achieve Canada's climate change goals must be conducted in a way that does not significantly impact northern cost of living, undermine food security or threaten emerging economies. For

this reason, the three territories are equally focussed on climate change adaptation and mitigation as outlined in the *Pan-territorial Adaptation Strategy*.

Aboriginal Children in Care

Premiers discussed the work by provinces and territories to ensure that fewer Aboriginal children are in the child welfare system and improve outcomes for Aboriginal children in care. Premiers look forward to seeing the results of this work at the summer meeting of Canada's Premiers.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Premiers discussed the need for coordinated action to prevent and end violence against Indigenous women and girls and confirmed their commitment to a second National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls to be held in 2016. Premiers also voiced their support for an inaugural roundtable in Manitoba for law enforcement, prosecutors and victim services which will explore best practices better coordination and information-sharing on policing and justice responses to missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Premiers continue to support the National Aboriginal Organizations in their call for an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Premiers noted the release of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada on June 2, 2015 and hope the Commissioner's recommendations will spur action from all Canadians that will put us all on a process towards reconciliation. The territorial governments are reviewing the commission's recommendations to consider new, and ways to build upon existing, efforts aimed at reconciliation.

Mental Wellness

As a follow-up to the 2014 Northern Premiers' Forum, Premiers provided an update on work done in their respective territories to advance e-mental health and other methods of delivering mental health services in remote communities.

2016 Northern Premiers' Forum

Premier Darrell Pasloski confirmed that Yukon will host next year's Northern Premiers' Forum.

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