CALL FOR A MORATORIUM IN THE RING OF FIRE TO PROTECT WATERSHEDS AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

We, the undersigned environmental, Indigenous, and civil society organizations call on the governments of Canada and Ontario to establish an immediate moratorium in the Ring of Fire for all mineral exploration, assessments for proposed road projects, and other potential developments including the Northern Road link. It is critical the moratorium remain in effect until:

1. Protection plans for the region’s sensitive wetlands and watersheds are in place, and

2. Access to clean water, housing, and health services have been secured for all upstream and downstream communities from the proposed Ring of Fire.
This call to action is in support of the request by Mushkegowuk Council and Neskantaga First Nation of Treaty 9 that a moratorium be put in place until a proper protection plan is implemented. As requested, a protection plan must be comprehensive, based on best available science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and reflect the global significance of the carbon rich Hudson Bay-James Bay Lowland, including the Attawapiskat, Kapiskau, Albany, Ekwan, Opinnagau and Winisk Rivers and the thousands of streams that flow into Hudson Bay and James Bay.

We call on Canada and Ontario to honour and protect inherent Indigenous and treaty rights, and to take immediate actions to address the urgent health, housing, and water crises facing communities. Mining interests cannot continue to be prioritized over the health, lands, and natural laws of Indigenous communities.

Living up to the promise of reconciliation means action is required now to prevent further violations of Indigenous rights. To fulfill this duty, we call on Canada and Ontario to enact a moratorium to sustain the lands and waters that, since time immemorial, have been relied upon by region’s First Nations.

The ancient peatlands of this region continue to serve as significant carbon sinks and have been cooling the whole earth for millennia. An immediate moratorium safeguards one of the few remaining intact boreal peatlands and protects both us and the generations that follow.
Sincerely,

Canadian Environmental Law Association
Theresa McClenaghan, Executive Director & Legal Counsel

East Coast Environmental Law
Lisa Mitchell, Executive Director & Senior Lawyer

Friends of the Attawapiskat River
Mike Koostachin, Director

Mining Injustice Solidarity Network
Kate Klein, Organizer

MiningWatch Canada
Jamie Kneen, Co-Manager

Northwatch
Brennain Lloyd, Project Coordinator

Ontarians for a Just Accountable Mineral Strategy
Joan Kuyek, Chair

Sierra Club Canada Foundation
Gretchen Fitzgerald, National Programs Director
Letter Requesting Moratorium

West Coast Environmental Law
Anna Johnston, Staff Lawyer

Wildlands League
Anna Baggio, Conservation Director

Omushkegowuk Women's Water Council
Jennifer Wabano, Head

World Wildlife Fund Canada
Megan Leslie, President & CEO

cc.
Grand Chief Jonathan Solomon, Mushkegowuk Council
Chief David Nakogee, Attawapiskat First Nation
Chief Leo Friday, Kashechewan First Nation
Chief Robert Nakogee, Fort Albany First Nation
Charlie Angus, MP Timmins – James Bay
Guy Bourgouin, MPP Mushkegowuk – James Bay
Jerry V. DeMarco, Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development
Tyler Schulz, Assistant Auditor General, Commissioner of the Environment (Acting)