

## **An open letter to Premier Ford,**

**Minister Fedeli, Minister of Finance,**

**Minister Rickford Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines & Indigenous Affairs,**

**MPP Romano, Parliamentary Assistant to Minister Rickford,**

**Minister Yakabuski, Minister of Transportation,**

**Minister Jones, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport**

It has been over 5 months since this release:

**On May 3, 2018 @ 07:53 The Wawa-News.com headline read:  
Doug Ford Addresses NOMA . . . “Plan will deliver real respect, real change  
& real hope for the people of Northern Ontario.”**

On May 2nd, 2018, Ontario PC Leader (now Premier) Doug Ford addressed the annual meeting of the Northwestern Ontario Municipalities Association (NOMA) during which he shared how his Plan for the People of Ontario will deliver real respect, real change and real hope for the people of Northern Ontario. This included these promises for northern Ontario:

- The Ontario PCs will bring back full passenger rail service to the North.
- First, that means completing an environmental assessment of what equipment needs to be purchased and what upgrades need to be made to restore the service.
- Second, annual funding must be provided to make the train a reality. The Ontario PCs have budgeted \$45 million for annual operating costs. *(Minister Fedeli said the PC budget has allocated \$30 million for the purchase of new rail cars and \$15 million in an annual subsidy.)*

Considering rail's economic, social and environmental benefits, Northern Ontario municipal councils, First Nation councils, Canadian Federation of Students, Economic Development Committees as well as several politicians at the Federal and Provincial levels have provided resolutions of support for the return of passenger rail to northern Ontario over the past 3 years. Virtually every community on the Toronto / Cochrane rail line from Washago north as well as the Algoma Central Rail line from Sault Ste Marie to Hearst has forwarded their resolutions of support to a variety of provincially elected MPPs as well as Federal MPs. With the election of the PC government and their promise to return passenger rail service to Northern Ontario, these municipalities and their constituents deserve an update on the time frame for the return of northern rail travel.

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After all, as Steve Forbes<sup>1</sup> said: **“A promise made should be a promise kept.”** We are confident Northern Ontario municipalities surely agree with this statement, especially when it comes to election campaign statements.

- So, what does this promise really mean:  
***The Ontario PCs will bring back full passenger rail service to the North.***  
Does this include the old “Northlander” route as well as the ACR (perhaps working with the Federal government on this)?

The NEORN LOOP<sup>2</sup> is a “modern, innovative, comprehensive and integrated, passenger rail service could radically enhance Northern Ontario’s regional intercommunity connectivity and do so using existing rail infrastructure”<sup>3</sup> along with bus feeder lines to provide service to northern Ontario and connect it with southern Ontario and the rest of Canada. Something essential for consideration when planning for the multimodal needs of northern Ontario for the next 25 years.

**NEORN has advocated for the needed rail service.**

**The municipalities have forwarded council resolutions supporting the needed rail service.<sup>4</sup>**

**The PC election promise was to “bring back full passenger rail service to the North”.**

**The need for passenger rail service has not diminished.**

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/steve\\_forbes\\_404924](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/steve_forbes_404924)

<sup>2</sup> See brochure included or web [neorn.ca](http://neorn.ca)

<sup>3</sup> NPI article “Actions to Move Ontario Forward, Passenger Rail”

<http://www.northernpolicy.ca/upload/documents/news-releases/en-press-release-multimodal-series-4-pas.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Resolutions, letters, forwarded in support of NEORN advocacy for passenger rail service in northern Ontario – see attached copies

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The people of Northern Ontario deserve to know **WHEN** passenger rail service will be available to allow them to connect more easily year-round with their health and education services, family, friends as well as employment opportunities.

And just as important – this will significantly support and expand the Northern Ontario tourism industry by allowing tourists to come by rail!

NEORN continues to advocate for Northern Ontario's return of passenger rail service. We are confident that Premier Ford's PC government will keep its promise of bringing back full passenger rail service to the North.

Please tells us: **WHEN CAN WE BUY OUR TICKETS?**

Your response to this question will be appreciated by all residents and tourists alike!

Respectfully submitted,

NEORN Co Chairs: Lucille Frith and Howie Wilcox

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Attachments 4. Resolutions, letters, forwarded to various MPPs and MPs as well as provincial and federal ministries in support of NEORN advocacy for passenger rail service in Northern Ontario

### **Hearst-Cochrane-Toronto Rail Line Resolutions (CN & ONR)**

Hearst, Mattice-Val Côté, Fauquier-Strickland, Cochrane, Taykwa Tagamou Nation, Timmins Economic Development Board, Black River-Matheson, McGarry, Chamberlain, Charlton & Dack, Thornloe, Temiskaming Shores (Dymond, Haileybury, New Liskeard), Cobalt, Coleman, Latchford, Temagami, East Ferris, North Bay, Machar, South River, Sundridge, Huntsville Economic Development Committee, Gravenhurst

Central Almaguin Economic Development Cttee. (Sundridge, South River, Machar, Strong, Joly)

District Municipality of Muskoka (Huntsville, Bracebridge, Gravenhurst, Township of Lake of Bays, Township of Muskoka Lakes, Township of Georgian Bay)

Temiskaming Municipal Association (Armstrong, Brethour, Casey, Chamberlain, Charlton/Dack, Cobalt, Coleman, Englehart, Evanturel, Harley, Harris, Hilliard, Hudson, James, Kerns, Kirkland Lake, Larder Lake, Latchford, Matchewan, McGarry, Temagami, Temiskaming Shores, Thornloe)

North Eastern Ontario Municipal Association (Black River-Matheson, Cochrane, Fauquier-Strickland, Hearst, Iroquois Falls, Kapuskasing, Kirkland Lake Mattice-Val Côté, Moonbeam, Moosonee, Opatatika, Smooth Rock Falls, Timmins, Val Rita-Harty)

### **Sault Ste Marie – Hearst Rail line Resolutions (ACR)**

Sault S. Marie, Dubreuilville, Wawa, Hearst, Agawa Region Cottagers Association

Chiefs of Ontario (Special Chiefs Assembly)

Mushkegowuk Council (includes Attawapiskat First Nation, Kashechewan First Nation, Fort Albany First Nation, Moose Cree First Nation, Taykwa Tagamou Nation, Chapleau Cree First Nation, Missanabie Cree First Nation)

### **Member of Parliament**

Anthony Rota, MP Nipissing-Timiskaming

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