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Northeastern & Northwestern Ontario – Northern Leaders and Industry Call for Coordinated Investment in Highways 11 and 17

Northeastern & Northwestern Ontario – Municipal leaders and industry partners are joining forces to call on the provincial and federal governments to accelerate investment in Highways 11 and 17, recognizing the corridor as essential to public safety, economic stability, and national connectivity.

The Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities and the Ontario Trucking Association have announced a strengthened partnership to advance this shared priority, building on long-standing advocacy efforts across Northern Ontario.

As the only continuous east–west highway connection linking Eastern and Western Canada, Highways 11 and 17 play a critical role in the movement of goods and people. The corridor supports billions in annual trade and remains a vital link for communities across the North.

"The OTA applauds NOMA and FONOM's leadership on this matter, and we look forward to working together to make this a reality," said OTA president Stephen Laskowski. "Ten years after the Nipigon Bridge got wiped out, severing the Trans-Canada and exposing the corridor's vulnerability, we're still waiting for a meaningful federal and provincial response that matches the scale of this risk.

"However, we believe it is a new day with Prime Minister Carney and Premier Ford's shared commitment to nation-building," Laskowski continued. "With the federal government's recent focus on strategic infrastructure and the province's push for growth, we are hopeful that 10 years of inaction are finally over. We need a nation-building investment that reflects the corridor's role as a lifeline for our economy and national security."



Despite its importance, the highway system continues to face safety challenges. Long stretches of two-lane roadways, combined with high volumes of commercial traffic and northern driving conditions, increase the risk to motorists and disrupt Canada's supply chain.

"This alignment between municipal leaders and industry reinforces what Northerners already know that Highways 11 and 17 are critical to our safety and to Canada's economy," said Dave Plourde, President of the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities. "With momentum building, now is the time for governments to work together and move practical improvements forward."

Industry leaders echoed the need for coordinated action, pointing to both economic impacts and ongoing safety concerns.

"Highways 11 and 17 are more than just roads; they are lifelines that connect Northern Ontario to the rest of the country," said Rick Dumas, President of the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association. "Working together ensures that both municipal priorities and industry realities are reflected as governments consider next steps."

The corridor has also been identified as increasingly important to Canada's economic security and future growth, particularly as demand for natural resources and critical minerals from Northern Ontario rises.

Municipal and industry leaders continue to advocate for a phased approach to improvements, including targeted widening projects such as four-laning and the two-plus-one model, alongside enhanced safety and enforcement measures.

Together, they are calling on both levels of government to coordinate funding, streamline approvals, and recognize Highways 11 and 17 as a shared national priority.

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