



Media Release

Ontario Alliance of First Nations and Non-First Nations asks Feds to Hit the Pause Button on Species at Risk Policy

May 9th, 2018 - An Alliance of First Nation and non-First Nation leaders in Ontario are concerned about the potential social, economic and environmental impacts of species at risk (SAR) policy being developed by the Federal Government and the current direction being proposed for managing and conserving caribou.

Al Spacek, President of FONOM and Mayor of Kapuskasing commented, “The Ontario Government has taken these concerns very seriously and have committed to achieving a better understanding of the impacts of climate change on species at risk, the cumulative impacts of all species at risk on a broad, dynamic landscape, and a much better appreciation of the socio-economic impacts on our communities. However, delivering on this commitment will take time and we remain very concerned that the window of opportunity being provided by the Ontario Government is now being placed in jeopardy by our Federal Government.”

On April 30th, the Federal Government issued a progress report on woodland caribou where it identified that since 2012, Ontario has taken real and practical steps in managing caribou habitat on the ground and ensuring a sustainable supply of caribou habitat over space and time.

“The Alliance and Ontario Government have been working together to ensure that responsible and practical steps are being taken to move Ontario forward with species at risk policy,” stated Wendy Landry, President of NOMA and Mayor of Shuniah. She continued, “To put the livelihoods of 57,000 men and women employed in forestry, and our northern and rural communities at risk, by basing an entire national report on one criteria (disturbance), seems short-sighted.”

Chief Edward Wawia of Red Rock Indian Band said, “We are concerned that the role of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) has largely been absent from Environment and Climate Change Canada caribou policy development. Our Indigenous communities and rights

holders within Ontario are taking on an increasingly important leadership role in the management of Ontario’s Crown forests. Our communities are investing in the sector and even becoming the forest manager and license holder. If, through a Federal emergency order or Conservation Agreement, the Federal Government steps into traditional and provincial lands to propose how our forests will be managed, there is a high risk that the progress we have made will be lost.”

“We were disappointed to learn that Environment and Climate Change Canada did not use their April 30th report as an opportunity to include discussion on other factors that contribute to caribou herds being “self-sustaining.” Instead, ECCC continues to focus solely on disturbance thresholds, which was the only metric by which Canadian jurisdictions were judged,” said Jamie Lim, President and CEO of the Ontario Forest Industries Association. She concluded, “We urge the Federal Government to postpone prematurely implementing public policy that will hurt the middle class and expand their considerations on species at risk. We believe that more provinces will join us in voicing their concerns.”

- 30 -

Mayor Wendy Landry
Municipality of Shuniah
President of NOMA
(807) 626-6686

Mayor Al Spacek
Town of Kapuskasing
President of FONOM
(705) 335-0001

Chief Ed Wawia
Red Rock Indian Band
(807) 887-2510

Jamie Lim
President & CEO
OFIA
(416) 368-6188