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July 22, 2021

Hon. Doug Ford,
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1
Via email: premier@ontario.ca

Re: Northwestern Ontario Fires, Kiiwetinoong

Premier Ford,

We are writing today to request that you take immediate action on the fires burning across the North. Fire is threatening the safety of families and communities in Kiiwetinoong. Five First Nations are in the process of evacuation and more are on standby.

As of July 21, 166 active forest fires were burning across the Northwest, the majority of them in Kiiwetinoong.

We are asking you, Premier Doug Ford, to send more help and to declare a state of emergency now. More resources on the ground are needed, without delay, in order to successfully fight these fires and make communities safe again. This includes more helicopters, water bombers, and more firefighters.

We are thankful – and local leaders are thankful – for the dedication and support provided by the firefighters who've travelled from other parts of the province, and Canada, and even farther away, such as Mexico. However, with the increasing severity of the wildfires each year we need more local firefighting capacity here, and the firefighters we do have in the North need seamless re-certifications. This requires your political commitment to do this so the resources can be in place for when this happens again – which it will.

Ontario has seen a total of 724 fires this season as compared to 414 last year. The 10-year average is 458 fires by July 18 annually. This increase is extremely troubling.

Vulnerable people and families, especially in fly-in communities, need help to leave their homes, and to be flown out of their communities and into nearby locations for safe shelter. You must not leave them on their own. They need immediate support to find evacuation locations as close to their home communities in Northern Ontario as possible due to the wraparound supports that those from fly-in communities require. Our offices have been hearing from communities who are doing the work to safely



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evacuate their people that they have been informed that there is not enough air support or beds for evacuees.

Without any action from you today Premier Ford, these fires will only become a greater humanitarian, health, and climate disaster for the people of Northern Ontario.

As the Premier, you must do everything to ensure that these fires do not grow larger and to take further measures using the resources of the province to ensure the safety of Ontarians and protection of property. That's why we're requesting that you come to Red Lake and see for yourself the devastation this has wrought and why more resources are required.

Given the urgency of this situation, we look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Sol Mamakwa, MPP
Kiiwetinoong

Judith Monteith-Farrell, MPP
Thunder Bay-Atikokan

cc: Greg Rickford, Minister of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry
Ontario Regional Chief Glen Hare
Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, Nishnawbe Aski Nation
Eric Melillo, MP Kenora