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**Charlie Angus**

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*The Honourable Navdeep Bains  
Innovation, Science and Economic Development Minister  
Confederation Building Room 356  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario Canada K1A 0A6*

*January 28<sup>th</sup> 2016*

**RE: FEDNOR**

Minister Bains,

At the outset let me congratulate you on your appointment as the Minister for Innovation, Science and Economic Development. I am sure you will bring great commitment and energy to the file.

Nonetheless, I must express my concern that under this new government FedNor continues to be the poor cousin of the other regional economic development agencies. FedNor plays a crucial role for economic development projects in Northern Ontario and yet it is the only economic development body that is not a stand-alone agency.

I am concerned that northern economic development has been buried within a huge department focused on science and innovation. I am further concerned that the Prime Minister has decided that Northern Ontario won't even have a minister to speak for our issues.

In previous Liberal and Conservative governments there was always a tradition of naming a FedNor Minister who came from the north and could speak to the fundamental differences between the resource-based economies of the north and the urban/suburban south. Given the ongoing budget cuts to FedNor and the increasing economic strain placed on the resource regions of the north, I am concerned that the Prime Minister has chosen to overlook Northern Ontario.

FedNor provides needed investments to help us diversify our economy and build infrastructure in Northern Ontario. Whether it is in helping small businesses grow, assisting our local agricultural communities to develop regional networks, or providing innovative tools for established companies, I have seen firsthand the pivotal role FedNor plays on the ground in North Ontario's communities.

As we get hit by the downturn in the commodity cycles, these funds are as important as ever. And the recent fiasco with the Nipigon Bridge, is a wake-up call showing that Northern Ontario's infrastructure is not only key for our economy up North, but, key in connecting Canada's economy across the country.

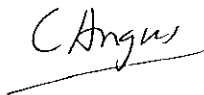
In order to reassure the communities and entrepreneurs of the north, I am asking for you to provide a firmer commitment of your government's willingness to stand up for our region. This can be done in the upcoming budget by reversing the previous government's cuts to Fed Nor.

Since 2005-06 FedNor's annual budget has been cut by more than \$31 million - or nearly 41%. On top of these cuts, the agency failed to spend 8.5 million dollars allocated by parliament in 2013-2014 alone and in the same year they missed their target for "jobs created or maintained" by 840 jobs or 28% of their annual target. The result was a double-whammy for our region ---- less money budgeted for our regional economic development, and even less being spent.

It is critical to the long-term sustainability of our regional economy and of our communities that you take action to fix the neglect of the previous government. I am asking you to work with northern Ontario MPs to reverse the cuts and to finally establish FedNor as a stand alone economic development agency to ensure greater independence, transparency and accountability.

I look forward to working with you on these key priorities for FedNor to deliver the needed economic growth for Northern Ontario.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "C Angus". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line that serves as a separator between the signature and the typed name below.

Charlie Angus  
MP Timmins-James Bay