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HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Allan O'Dette President & CEO
Ontario Chamber of Commerce
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March 30th 2015

RE: Ring of Fire

Mr. O'Dette,

Last week's comments from the Federal Government's Treasury Board President Tony Clement on the Ring of Fire were disappointing but unfortunately, they were not surprising. While Canada's economy slows down and a delayed federal budget adds to the growing uncertainty, the Federal Government once again confirmed its lack of leadership and unwillingness to commit to developing the Ring of Fire.

We have seen the Federal Government's abandonment of the Ring Of Fire project reflected in the Ontario Chamber of Commerce's failing grade for their lack of leadership. There has been no attempt to bring together the major players, there is no infrastructure plan, there is no political will, and naturally this has led to development being significantly stalled. As a guest speaker at the Timmins Chamber of Commerce, Minister Clement summarized the Conservative Government's position that Ontario and specifically Northern Ontario should not be expecting the government to step in and move the project forward.

This is unfortunate, as Mr. Clement was appointed as the lead federal minister to get this vital project off the ground. Blaming global commodity cycles is a red herring when there have been no visible moves by Mr. Clement or his government to encourage this project to move forward. It is a position that ignores the Federal Government's role in bringing everyone to the table, consulting First Nations and ensuring that there is a plan.

New Democrats are committed willing partners in developing the Ring of Fire. That is why we have appointed Howard Hampton as a special advisor on The Ring of Fire to our leader, Tom Mulcair. That is why we have been conducting Ring of Fire outreach tours through-out the communities to try and build consensus and momentum.

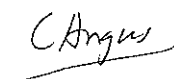
We understand its importance to Canada's, Ontario's and specifically Northern Ontario's economies. Your recent report estimated that the Ring of Fire will sustain 5,500 jobs a year, boost economic activity in Ontario by \$9.4 billion, and provide \$2 billion in revenue to government. The Ring of Fire provides a tremendous opportunity to unlock the economic potential of the region.

As you wrote, "it is government's role to champion economic development opportunities, not downplay them as Mr. Clement has done". We whole-heartedly agree. Canada needs a Federal Government that will not only be at the table, but, driving this project forward. We need engagement, investments in infrastructure, true consultation with First Nations, and the necessary political will to make it happen. New Democrats are committed willing partners to making it happen and we will make it happen.

Sincerely,



Claude Gravelle
NDP MP Nickel-Belt



Charlie Angus
NDP MP Timmins-James Bay



John Rafferty
NDP MP Thunder Bay- Rainy River



Carole Hughes
NDP MP Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing