

December 8, 2025

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford,

On behalf of the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM), I am writing to respectfully request that the Province of Ontario formally advance the widening of Highways 11 and 17—including a combination of four-laning and 2+1 highway improvements—to the Government of Canada as a **National Project**, to be led through the **Major Projects Office** in partnership with Prime Minister Carney.

As you know, these highways form Ontario's section of the Trans-Canada Highway and remain predominantly two-lane, despite carrying some of the highest freight volumes in the country. Every other province's Trans-Canada Highway system is largely four-laned. The consequences for Ontario are well-known: higher fatality and injury rates, recurring highway closures, and repeated disruptions to the national economy. Today, more than **8,400 trucks move 87,000 tonnes of goods worth over \$200 million daily** across this corridor, and the Ministry of Transportation projects that trucks will make up **nearly half of all traffic within the decade**.

A Clear Signal from Ottawa

Last week, FONOM and the Northern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) completed a two-day advocacy mission to Ottawa. Our delegations met with:

- Senior staff from the Leader of the Official Opposition
- MP Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay–Rainy River)
- MP Pauline Rochfort (Nipissing–Timiskaming)
- Minister François-Philippe Champagne
- Minister Patty Hajdu
- Minister Mélanie Joly
- Parliamentary Secretary Jennifer McKelvie (Infrastructure & Housing)
- Parliamentary Secretary Peter Fragiskatos (Immigration)
- Housing Critic Scott Aitchison (CPC)
- MP Eric Melillo (Kenora/Kiiwetinoong – CPC)
- Senior staff in the Prime Minister's Office

Throughout these discussions, we heard a consistent message: **the federal government is prepared to support this project with 50-cent dollars**, provided that Ontario brings forward

the proposal as a national priority with a defined proponent and pathway. Federal officials were clear that this is precisely the type of corridor-scale infrastructure that fits the mandate of the Major Projects Office.

Growing National Significance

Northern Ontario is entering a period of unprecedented economic activity, with impacts far beyond the region:

- Large-scale resource development in the **Ring of Fire**
- Transport of **spent nuclear fuel** to the NWMO facility in Ignace
- Expansion of **St. Lawrence port capacity** to bolster food security
- Long-term opportunities tied to a future **James Bay port**
- Increasing movement of energy, goods, and workers across the country

These developments collectively make Highways 11 and 17 a **nation-building corridor** essential to Canada's economic security, supply chain reliability, national defence logistics, and long-term competitiveness.

A Modern Approach: Four-Lanes Where Needed, 2+1 Where Appropriate

FONOM—supported by AMO, ROMA, NOMA, and the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus—is advancing a mixed infrastructure model that combines:

- **Highway twinning (full four-laning)**
- **Strategic widening**
- **Modern 2+1 highway treatments**

This approach improves safety and traffic flow while reducing costs and environmental impact. It mirrors successful national highway strategies in Sweden, Finland, and several European jurisdictions.

Cost analysis and parametric modelling have already begun, consistent with MTO Level 1 methods.

A Provincial Lead Proponent Is Essential

While FONOM is building the groundwork—including stakeholder engagement, narrative development, and preliminary feasibility—we fully acknowledge that the ultimate proponent must be the **Government of Ontario and the Ministry of Transportation**. A coordinated request from Ontario is the required step for the federal government to:

1. Recognize the project under the **Building Canada Act**
2. Assign it to the **Major Projects Office**
3. Launch joint planning, design, and investment development work

Importantly, no portion of the Trans-Canada Highway was ever built without government leadership and investment. Ontario's leadership is therefore indispensable.

Request to the Province

FONOM respectfully asks for your consideration and support in the following areas:

1. **Recognizing the widening of Highways 11 and 17** (through four-laning and/or the proven 2+1 model) **as a provincial priority** suitable for national partnership and investment;
2. **Raising this initiative with Prime Minister Carney** as a potential National Project under the Major Projects Office; and
3. **Encouraging the Ministry of Transportation** to continue engaging with federal counterparts on preliminary scoping, costing, and project definition.

We believe this work will help connect the North, strengthen Canada's internal trade corridors, improve safety for families and workers, and support economic growth across all regions of our province.

FONOM and our municipal partners are ready to assist your government in any way we can.

Thank you for your leadership and for your continued commitment to the people and communities of Northern Ontario.

Respectfully,



Dave Plourde
FONOM, President

Cc'd Prime Minister Carney

Minister Prabmeet Sarkaria - Transportation Provincial
Minister Fedeli - Economic Development Provincial
Minister Harris - Natural Resources Provincial
Minister Holland - Forestry and Forest Products Provincial
Minister Lecce - Energy and Mines Provincial
Minister Pirie - Northern Economic Development and Growth Provincial
Minister Rickford- Ring of Fire Provincial
Minister Surma - Infrastructure Provincial
Minister Thompson - Rural Affairs Provincial
Minister Steven MacKinnon - Transportation Federal
Minister Tim Hodgson - Natural Resources Federal
Minister Leblanc - Internal Trade Federal
Minister Patty Hajdu - Economic Development for Northern Ontario Federal