

ONTARIO ELECTION 2014
New Democratic Party of Ontario
 Summary of Political Platforms & Statements: Aboriginal, Ring of Fire issues

GENERAL
Leader/Platform Statements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No references in main platform document to "Aboriginal" or "First Nation" outside references to Ring of Fire (platform document) • ".... Get First Nation communities off diesel and connect them to the grid - New Democrats will work with First Nations to connect remote communities to the power grid and get them off expensive diesel electricity generation" (26 May 14 news release http://www.ontariondp.ca/horwath_launches_a_plan_that_makes_sense_for_northerners)
Candidate Statements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q) Should the government be more directly involved in negotiations between First Nations and industry (particularly the mining sector)? • A) Gilles Bisson (NDP, Timmins-James Bay): Yes, government should be more directly involved in these negotiations. In fact, that is why we want to create revenue sharing and land use planning with First Nations. Getting these two things right is the key for getting First Nations not only on side, but real partners in mine exploration and development. This will create the certainty that industry needs when making decisions to explore and build mines in Ontario. (source: http://www.timminspress.com/2014/06/10/candidates-address-issues-part-2)
Chiefs of Ontario Election Analysis document (Source: http://bit.ly/1KjoJcb)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Increase tax compliance and crack down on the underground economy -- Taxation presents an ongoing issue for First Nations. Furthermore, as the federal government moves to criminalize traditional economic activities such as tobacco harvesting, First Nations may find their jobs are inappropriately relegated to the "underground economy." While this promise on its own may not negatively affect or target First Nations, its implementation may have unintended implications." • "Reduce Hydro Costs -- First Nations across Ontario have been negatively affected by high energy costs. The NDP plans to reduce costs by merging Ontario's hydro agencies, capping CEO salaries and directly trading electricity exports. In addition, the NDP will remove debt retirement fees and HST from hydro bills. Subsidies will continue to exist for solar power. The NDP has not made commitments to keep the Feed-in-tariff (FIT) program or to continue to support wind power. There are no commitments to help communities move off of diesel. The NDP plan may result in lower prices for electricity on-reserve. However, more information will be needed about plans for the FIT program and to expand the grid to determine the full breadth of potential positive and negative effects." • "Freeze post-secondary tuition and make student loans interest free -- The NDP proposes to freeze tuition fees at 2014 levels. Under the current system, First Nations education funding is capped at a 2% yearly increase. The Post Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) is insufficient to support the majority of First Nations students seeking higher education. The PSSSP is not pegged to tuition, meaning that as tuition increases the PSSSP becomes even less effective. A tuition cap may help First Nations gain greater efficiency from federally allocated education funds." • "Cut ER wait times in half -- First Nations are reliant on provincial hospitals for most emergency health care. The NDP proposes to hire 250 new nurse practitioners, create an addition 1,400 long-term care beds, and attract doctors to underserved areas by forgiving their student debt. This may improve First Nation's access to health care." • "Conduct an Environmental Assessment of pipeline projects that impact our communities -- The NDP proposes to commit \$2 million annually to ensure community consultation on pipelines through the provincial Environmental Assessment. While this would be a significant improvement over current dialogue, there may be a key catch to this promise. Pipelines that cross provincial or international boundaries are not provincial jurisdiction, meaning they are assessed and approved by the federal government. Therefore, it is difficult to judge how often the funding will be triggered without a commitment to assess every pipeline proposed in Ontario. Furthermore, it is unclear if these funds will be accessible by First Nations."

RING OF FIRE (RoF)
Leader/Platform Statements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDP leader Andrea Horwath has committed to \$1B "or whatever it takes" to develop the RoF, although the funds don't appear in the party's platform document. (Northern Leaders Debate, 26 May 14) • ".... Invest in Ring of Fire infrastructure now - The NDP will create jobs now by accelerating Ring of Fire infrastructure investment and promoting revenue-sharing with communities and First Nations. We will create value-added jobs by ensuring resources are processed in Ontario" (26 May 14 news release, http://www.ontariondp.ca/horwath_launches_a_plan_that_makes_sense_for_northerners)
Candidate Statements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ".... Another priority, (Nickel Belt NDP candidate & incumbent France Gelinias) said, is development of the Ring of Fire, a massive planned chromite mining project in the mineral-rich James Bay Lowlands. The chromite could be smelted in Sudbury, potentially having a great impact on the economy in Sudbury and in Gelinias' home riding. "This is a game-changer for Sudbury," Gelinias said. "This has to be a priority. "There is a wealth, there is a possibility of prosperity in the Ring of Fire that is equal to none. The NDP has said and has continue to repeat if this wealth laid anywhere in southern Ontario, for a long time, there would have been the right amount of leadership, of time, effort and energy, resources put into place ... because they're located in the North, the foot-dragging has been really painful to watch." The NDP has not identified a specific dollar amount in its platform for investment in the Ring, but Gelinias said that's because her party is pledging "whatever it will take to get it developed."" (http://www.thesudburystar.com/2014/06/05/highway-69-ring-priorities-for-gelinias) • Q) What should be the government's role in developing the Ring of Fire mineral deposit? • A) Gilles Bisson (NDP, Timmins-James Bay): Without delay, a NDP government would provide sorely needed leadership with respect to the Ring of Fire. Unfortunately the Liberals have dropped the ball when it comes to this project. New Democrats would invest in necessary rail or road infrastructure and we would give First Nations a share of provincial and, hopefully, federal existing taxes on new resource projects. Also, we would provide training dollars to help train up the workforce that will be needed in the Ring of Fire. We will not allow ore mined in Ontario to be shipped unprocessed out of Ontario. (source: http://www.timminspress.com/2014/06/10/candidates-address-issues-part-2) • Q) What safeguards should be in place to ensure the Ring of Fire development doesn't harm the environment? • A) Gilles Bisson (NDP, Timmins-James Bay): There is no reason that the Ring of Fire development should harm the environment. The Ontario mining sector has become world leaders in how to mine in a sustainable way, by adopting systems like our mine closure planning system. A NDP government would ensure that all proper processes are followed to safeguard against any ramifications from this exciting find. New Democrats will work with all stakeholders because the health of the environment is important to all Ontarians. (source: http://www.timminspress.com/2014/06/10/candidates-address-issues-part-2)
Chiefs of Ontario Election Analysis document
(Source: http://bit.ly/1KjoJcb)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Invest in the Ring of Fire and Promote Revenue-Sharing – Development in northern resources and minerals has been held up by the lack of investments from the federal government. While the province has put forward some of the costs to open the Ring of Fire, more is needed. The NDP commitment to fund infrastructure in the Ring of Fire may or may not have implications for First Nations. It is unclear if the funding the NDP envisions will be sufficient to open the currently proposed Ring of Fire sites. If it is sufficient, it is unclear if the NDP will continue to follow the MOU recently signed between Matawa communities and the Province. The NDP commitment to promote revenue-sharing sets an important precedent in Ontario. First Nations have long called for resource revenue sharing arrangements. The NDP's willingness to explore revenue sharing in the Ring of Fire suggests that they may be open to it in other resource areas as well.

CHIEFS OF ONTARIO QUESTIONS TO PROVINCIAL PARTY LEADERS

(Source: <http://bit.ly/1B6Rnpl>)

- **Q) If elected, will your government work with Ontario First Nations leadership to the full implementation of the 100 recommendations put forth in the Final Report of the Ipperwash Inquiry? If yes, how do you foresee this taking place?**
- A) The Ontario NDP is committed to the Ipperwash Report recommendations. We will build meaningful relationships based on respect between Ontario and First Nations.
- **Q) If elected, will your government establish a framework on consultation with First Nations in Ontario based on the international standard of free, prior and informed consent? If yes, how do you foresee this taking place?**
- A) We believe that reconciliation cannot be achieved by unilaterally designed Crown policies or unilateral legislative reform; that courts have repeatedly upheld this principle with respect to Aboriginal law; and that government decisions should always be informed and shaped by the priorities and choices of the people who are affected. An Ontario NDP government will review the existing draft, Guidelines for Ministries on Consultation with Aboriginal Peoples Related to Aboriginal and Treaty Rights, and make sure it is applied consistently across government. We will establish a framework, which gives First Nations the opportunity for information gathering and consultation within their communities.
- **Q) If elected, will your government commit to developing resource revenue sharing arrangements with First Nations? If yes, please describe the steps and process you will take to implement resource revenue sharing. If no, please explain the steps your government would take to better incorporate First Nations into the global economy. If undecided, please describe the steps you will take to determine a position.**
- A) The Ontario NDP believes that a portion of revenue from new resource development should stay with First Nations in whose traditional territories it takes place. As part of a strategy to have First Nations participate in resource development and to support their economic self-sufficiency, an Ontario NDP government would develop, in consultation with First Nations, a resource revenue sharing policy that would see First Nation communities benefit from natural resource development in the province.
- **Q) If elected, will you develop capital infrastructure programs to assist First Nations on reserve? If so, how would this be undertaken?**
- A) An Ontario NDP government will maintain and build on programs that provide capital grants and loan guarantees to First Nations communities on reserves that promote skills training, business development, healthy lifestyles and community and recreation events. We will invest in the Ring of Fire infrastructure and we will make sure remote First Nations are connected to the grid and get off diesel generation.
- **Q) If elected, will you take concrete steps to ensure full recognition of First Nations' inherent jurisdictions? If so, what concrete steps do you foresee taking place?**
- A) An Ontario NDP government will operate on the basis of government-to-government relationships with First Nations, will seek to empower their traditional governance structures, and respect First Nations' self-determined priorities through all our relations with First Nations.
- **Q) If elected, will your government commit to fully funding First Nations programs, initiatives and organizations?**
- A) An Ontario NDP government will honour its obligations to fully fund First Nations programs to which it has committed. We believe that the provincial government has a duty to help First Nations and their communities move successfully towards self-governance and self-sufficiency, including programs that build governance capacity, create jobs, develop business partnerships, improve economic opportunities, and which support First Nations' capacity to participate in land and natural resource management.
- **Q) If elected, will your government negotiate the outstanding issues with respect to First Nation policing in Ontario, as was put forth in the Auditor General of Canada Spring 2014 Report? If yes, comment on how you foresee this happening.**
- A) An Ontario NDP government will make sure that First Nations self-administered policing services are appropriate and consistent with provincial policing legislation and standards. We will cover the cost of policing for communities where the federal government cut funding support.

WAWATAY NEWS SURVEY

Leader/Platform Statements

- **“Q) Please outline your party’s commitment to working with First Nations located in northern Ontario.** A) Andrea Horwath (NDP): We are committed to consulting with First Nations as partners on decisions that impact them. We will negotiate training opportunities for First Nations so they can take advantage of jobs related to mining development and ensure that a portion of the tax revenue from mining operations benefits the local First Nations communities to help provide community infrastructure and services.”
- **“Q) Once (re)elected into the Office of Premier of Ontario, how will your government work to address the needs of remote northern Ontario?** A) Andrea Horwath (NDP): We understand the high cost of living in the north and how this impacts health. We will invest in student nutrition programs and in 24-hour family health clinics in northern Ontario. The NDP will also help ensure that policing funds are maintained. And we are committed to connecting First Nation communities to the power grid and getting them off diesel.”
- **“Q) What is your government’s plan to include Ontario First Nations in the short-term and long-term benefits of our shared resources?** A) Andrea Horwath (NDP): We are fully committed to revenue sharing arrangements with First Nations and local governments on natural resource developments. We will ensure a portion of natural resource tax revenue goes to support local communities. We also believe that resources that are mined in Ontario should be processed in Ontario, and we have tabled bills with proposed measures to this end.”

Candidate Statements

- **Q) As First Nations struggle with limited infrastructure investments from the federal government for essential community services, do you feel that the province has a role to play in advocacy on these issues?**
- A) Andrew Foulds (TBSN-NDP): The province definitely has a role to play in advocacy. I’ll go further - it’s unacceptable for First Nations to go without the services everyone else takes for granted. It’s not good enough to just say: “It’s not my responsibility. That’s the Feds.” If things don’t happen because of federal inaction, then the province needs to step in.
- A) Mary Kozorys (TB-Atikokan NDP): Honestly, Stephen Harper is not going to suddenly wake up one day and embrace the cause of Aboriginal rights and an agenda of social justice. So the province both needs to lobby hard on behalf of First Nations, but also to take action where Ottawa is abandoning its responsibilities. Things will absolutely change with an NDP government.
- A) Sarah Campbell (Rainy River NDP): The federal government in so many ways has abandoned its treaty responsibilities. But Ontario has treaty responsibilities of its own that they have also abandoned. So often, nothing gets done because the provincial government holds up their hands in the air and says that’s the federal government’s responsibility and visa versa. So while of course we’ll advocate on behalf of First Nations to urge the federal government to meet its treaty obligations, a provincial NDP government will ensure the Ontario government meets its own treaty obligations.
- A) Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay NDP): Ontario signed Treaty 9 and an agreement with the federal government to cost share social services. However Ontario states it will not increase its share of First Nations funding unless the federal government does so first. This has led to a huge funding shortfall. It is my position that Ontario should lead by example by properly funding our share first.
- **Q) What is your vision for your riding in terms of social and economic development? How will First Nations be partners in your vision?**
- A) Andrew Foulds (TBSN-NDP): So many of our young people are in need of jobs and in need of training. In 10 years the Liberals have not addressed the serious youth unemployment for First Nations. We need to encourage job creation by helping small businesses rather than giving large corporations no strings attached corporate giveaways.
- A) Mary Kozorys (NDP): We need jobs now, and First Nations need to be a big part of the mix. This means that development of natural resources has to benefit First Nations. We also must recognize that First Nations populations are young, and so we need to ensure training opportunities for First Nation youth.
- A) Sarah Campbell (Rainy River NDP): Remote communities that aren’t on the electricity grid must use expensive and polluting diesel fuel to produce their electricity. Electrical power should be there, dependably, cheaply, cleanly – for everyone. And we have to fight to ensure any resources development into traditional territory is done only with the support of First Nations and with oversight from First Nations and with benefits going to First Nations.
- A) Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay NDP): Ontario signed Treaty 9 and Ontario must respect our Treaty. First Nations and Ontario must approach the challenges we face on a government to government basis. This would allow First Nations to have a real say about how we approach mining, forestry and hydro developments. New Democrats believe in sharing the revenue to improve life for everyone in our communities.