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ONTARIO PROSPECTORS DISAPPOINTED
BILL 191 PASSES THIRD READING

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Board of Directors of the Ontario Prospectors Association (OPA) regrets that Bill 191, the Far North Act, was passed after the third reading by the Ontario Legislature.

The OPA believes the present form of the Far North Act will cripple exploration and related economic development in Ontario's Boreal Forest lands, an area recently demonstrated once again to hold vast mineral deposits within the "Ring of Fire" chromite (stainless steel) and copper, nickel and platinum group element (automobile pollution control) discoveries. While the timing of the discovery and onset of development of the Ring of Fire has fortunately preceded royal proclamation of the Far North Act, future capital investment will not freely flow into the legal limbo created by Far North Act in its current form.

The OPA applauds the Far North Act's recognition and support for Community-based Land Use Planning amongst the region's First Nation communities. However, advance selection of a 50% (225,000sq km) protection target under the Far North Act's proposed grid of "interconnected" waterway parks and protected spaces will ensure a 100% loss of potential for future discoveries and related economic development in this vast area of high mineral potential.

Exploration and mining in Ontario's north have historically been mainstays of the economies of both northern and southern Ontario. The Far North Act in its present form represents a potential loss of economic opportunity. Ontario's prospecting and exploration community will be forced look to other jurisdictions where there is more certainty for mine development once a discovery is made.

The Board of the OPA supports community-based land use planning to identify both new protected areas *in balance* with areas identified for potential economic development. Predetermined and politically motivated protected area outcomes violate the scientific basis of a proper land use planning process. An up-front 50% impenetrable

grid-like interconnected protected area requirement flies in the face of responsible land use planning.

The Ontario government has thus far failed to fully respond to the concerns of its northern residents regarding the Far North Act, to the detriment of mineral sector related job creation and the future economies of northern and southern Ontario. The Board of Directors of the Ontario Prospectors Association supports legislation which enables a credible land use planning process for Ontario's Far North. The OPA calls for the McGuinty government to amend the Far North Act accordingly prior to royal proclamation.

For further information please contact:

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