



September 26, 2018

The Honourable Greg Rickford
Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines and Indigenous Relations
5th Floor - Whitney Block
99 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1W1

Dear Minister Rickford:

The Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce and its region wide membership are proud supporters of the Nextbridge project to construct an East-West Tie between Wawa and Thunder Bay.

The need for reliable and dependable sources of energy now and for the future has been well established and documented thus leading to the need for such a transmission project.

In fact as you know, in March 2016, the Ontario Government declared the EWT Project as a provincial priority. However, in the absence of swift and immediate intervention, the project will undergo even more delay, this time at the hands of the Ontario Energy Board, as it appears prepared to re-visit its own decision to award the project to Nextbridge over competing bids from Hydro Ontario and Fortis.

Each and every community along the route will benefit from this project as will six First Nation communities — Fort William, Red Rock Indian Band, Pays Plat, Biggtong Nishnaabeg (formerly Pic River) and Michipicoten, an unprecedented level of regional support and collaboration.

Nextbridge has done anything and everything we could have asked for as a region.

The northwest region overall is the main benefactor with having 650 MW of reliable electricity, a tremendous confidence booster for the business community, in particular the larger energy users such as mining.

Years in the making, and at an advanced level of approval, the last thing this project needs is further delay. The East-West Tie Project cannot be allowed to turn into another "Ring of Fire" of lost opportunity.

We urge you and your Government to act with speed to get this project started this fall.

Northwestern Ontario is counting on it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark Caron
President
Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce

cc Rosemary Leclair, Ontario Energy Board