



NEWS RELEASE

Agreement to Restore Rail Service and Invest in the Port of Churchill Celebrated by OneNorth Communities

September 14th, 2018

Winnipeg – OneNorth co-chairs Onekanew Christian Sinclair and Churchill Mayor Michael Spence joined their partners today to celebrate their new partnership in the Arctic Gateway Group Limited Partnership, as new owners of the Hudson Bay Railway and Port of Churchill.

"Two years ago, one of the first calls I received as leader of Opaskwayak Cree Nation was from Mayor Spence," said Onekanew Sinclair. "We both recognized that the people on the rail line, along with those in the Kivalliq district that it supplies, should take the lead in shaping the destiny of our region. After a lot of hard work, and with new partners, we can today celebrate local regional ownership for these vital northern assets."

OneNorth, named for the equality and unity of all communities along the rail line - First Nations, Métis, municipalities and unincorporated communities, was formed in 2016. At the time the Port of Churchill was closed to grain shipments and workers were laid off. Rail service was challenged at times with needed repairs, and the railway owner wanted to sell. Following a historic blizzard in 2017 and spring flooding, rail service was canceled to Churchill and many northern communities were affected.

"Throughout the challenges we've had with the closure of the Port and loss of rail service, northern communities have remained united," remarked Mayor Spence. "With strong support from the Federal government and new business partners that allowed us to bring forward a plan for economic prosperity, we are here today announcing the successful efforts to buy these assets and repair them."

OneNorth communities recognize that the negotiations have been long and difficult at times. OneNorth would like to thank Paul Rivett (Fairfax President) and Murad Al-Katib (AGT President) and their teams. They are also pleased to join Missinippi Rail and northern First Nations in this historic partnership. Northern communities are excited for the opportunities that will come from this partnership.

"We are all committed to reinvesting in these assets and to make sure that northerners have a first chance at the employment, training and economic opportunities that investments will bring to the region," said Mayor Spence.

"I know I speak for all of us when I say "*thank you - ekosani*" to Prime Minister Trudeau, to Honourable Ministers Carr, Morneau, Garneau and Bains, to Wayne Wouters the Federal Negotiator, officials at Western Diversification, and to all Canadians for their support, for understanding our needs, and for recognizing the potential to turn this Arctic Gateway into a corridor of prosperity for all of us," concluded Onekanew Sinclair.

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OneNorth was formed as a coalition of First Nation, northern municipalities along the Bay line and the Kivillaq Inuit Association representing the 7 hamlets on the Hudson Bay coast in Nunavut.

The Manitoba on-line communities are Opaskwayak Cree Nation, The Pas, Cormorant, Flin Flon, York Factory First Nation, RM of Kelsey, Thompson, War Lake First Nation, Thicket Portage, Cross Lake, Gillam, Cranberry Portage, Pikwitonei, Tataskweyak Cree Nation, Ilford, Fox Lake Cree Nation, Wabowden, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation and Churchill.