



Representing the Districts of Kenora, Rainy River and Thunder Bay  
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November 23, 2022

## **Resolution 2022-07 Federal Electoral Boundaries Redistribution**

### Background:

The Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Ontario has proposed a new electoral map that would reduce the number of federal election districts in Northern Ontario from ten to eight plus the addition of indigenous representation. The proposed change would see the two largest ridings in the far North, Kenora and Timmins-James Bay, amended and combined into one massive riding called Kiiwentinoong-Mushkegowuk, spanning from the Manitoba Border to Quebec, and Kenora's current riding boundary readjusted dramatically and combined with Thunder Bay-Rainy River with further significant changes to the Thunder Bay-Superior North and Algoma- Manitoulin-Kapuskasing boundaries. The massive land mass of the districts would make them virtually ungovernable, and ultimately infringe on the democratic rights of northerners. The proposed new districts will force municipalities to compete for the limited amount of riding funding which will further exacerbate inequities in the North. Northern Ontario's population per riding is already much higher than many other rural and isolated regions in Canada's north and the courts have ruled that representation in Canada's democracy is not based merely on population but on regions of interest and the right of citizens to engage with their elected representatives. Therefore, any changes to electoral Boundaries should be based on the principle of maintaining communities of interest within boundaries that are equitable in terms of population and geography, which is not seen in the current proposed new districts. For example, Red Lake, an active mining community, Ear Falls and Sioux Lookout would now be part of the super riding Kiiwentinoong-Mushkegowuk and their representation will be significantly diluted. The Federal Boundaries Commission proposal to cut representation in the north is contrary to the 2017 Electoral boundary changes for Ontario that recognized the need to add two seats to ensure fair participation for northern residents.

### Recommendation:

WHEREAS the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Ontario has proposed a new electoral map that would reduce the number of federal election districts in Northern Ontario from ten to eight plus the addition of indigenous representation; and

WHEREAS the Constitution of Canada requires that the federal electoral districts be reviewed every ten years; and

WHEREAS the most significant change would see the two largest ridings in the far North, Kenora and Timmins-James Bay, amended and combined into one massive riding called Kiiwentinoong-Mushkegowuk, spanning from the Manitoba Border to Quebec, and Kenora's current riding boundary readjusted dramatically and combined with Thunder Bay-Rainy River with further significant changes to the Thunder Bay-Superior North and Algoma- Manitoulin-Kapuskasing boundaries; and

WHEREAS the land mass of Northern Ontario is large, and the new Kenora-Thunder Bay-Rainy River riding would be virtually ungovernable, and ultimately infringe on the democratic rights of northerners; and

WHEREAS the Commission itself concluded any “further reduction in the number of districts in the north would imperil the principle of effective representation in this part of the province, considering its widely dispersed population and communities of interest”; and

WHEREAS the voice of the North in the House of Commons is already imperiled and underrepresented by so few seats; and

WHEREAS our region has diverse and unique interests which are quite different from one another and deserve adequate diverse representation in Ottawa; and

WHEREAS the Kenora District was deemed an “extraordinary circumstance” in 2012 during the last boundary review, and because of which it was not revised at that time; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) strongly opposes to the proposed redistribution plan and the reduction of Northern ridings and representatives;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT NOMA calls upon the Federal Electoral Boundary Commission to consider the vast land mass that already exists within our electoral boundary and refrain from extending any boundary which reduces northern ridings and representatives;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT NOMA calls upon the Commission to retain the current ten Electoral Districts, plus keep the planned Indigenous Representation.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT NOMA encourages the Federal Government to introduce legislation that would provide for a minimum number of guaranteed Districts for Northern Ontario to protect the North and ensure that the voices of Northern and Rural Communities are heard.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario, The Hon. Patty Hadju, Eric Melillo, MP Kenora Riding, Lise Vaugeois, MP Thunder Bay – Superior North, the Associations of Municipalities of Ontario, the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, and all NOMA clerks and CAO’s.

Moved By:

Seconded By:

CARRIED



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President