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## **2022 AMO Conference: NOMA to Discuss Issues Facing Northwestern Ontario**

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Thunder Bay, ON - Members of the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) Board and President Wendy Landry joined more than 1,700 participants in the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's 2022 AMO Conference in Ottawa from August 14 to 17.

NOMA met with Provincial Ministers including Minister Clark, Minister Rickford, Minister Bethlenfalvy, Minister Graydon Smith, Parliamentary Assistant Kevin Holland, COS Ryan Amato, numerous parliamentary staff, Liberal Party and NDP to discuss numerous issues including railway taxation and crossing costs, OMPF, sale of crown land, and public health and EMS.

NOMA asked government to undertake ongoing consideration of municipal taxation for railroad rights of way properties, based on a per tonne-mile concept to be consistent with other provinces. NOMA called on the Province of Ontario to conduct a review of this outdated practice of municipalities paying to maintain assets of a for-profit railway corporation and create solutions to municipalities covering a high percentage of railway crossing maintenance and construction.

We greatly appreciate the Government's \$500 million funding investment to OMPF and its stability commitment for 2022. NOMA wants reassurance that OMPF will remain stable indefinitely and that the funding allocation formula clearly reflects the needs of communities in Northwestern Ontario using a balanced approach to the funding structure that is fair for all. NOMA provided a municipality specific report to show the inadequacies in the OMPF formula.

NOMA asked the province to sell crown land for development within municipal boundaries. We see this as a win-win as the province would generate revenue from the sale while municipalities would then expand their property tax base.

NOMA made it clear to government that we do not support moving forward with the proposed public health and EMS modernization plan that the government delayed in 2019 that would reduce the number of Health Units from 35 to 10 and paramedic services from 55 to 10.

NOMA was pleased to hear that Government is willing to work with us on these outstanding issues. The Government did note that there are complexities to some issues that present challenges, but they are open to working with us to find a resolution.

NOMA, the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM), and the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA) jointly discussed the crisis of Homelessness, Mental Health, and Addictions with the Provincial Government.

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