

MPP makes transport program suggestions

Lake Nipigon MPP Gilles Pouliot has written to the provincial and federal Ministers of Transportation with suggestions for two major undertakings in Pouliot's riding.

The MPP asked the two Ministers to consider his idea of a highway circle route between Manitowadge in the east and Savant Lake near Sioux Lookout in the west. The route would include Armstrong and Nakina.

"Given the relative isolation of (these) communities and Via Rail's elimination of daily passenger train service along the CN main line, I propose that the federal and provincial governments undertake a joint venture to complete a...circle route," Pouliot said in the Oct. 30 letter.

He pointed out that many forestry companies in the area, such as Kimberly-Clark, have forest access roads following his general proposed road alignment.

"Using much of what is already there, it would be entirely feasible and desirable to remove the isolation experienced by Northern residents and at the same time act as a catalyst for accessing indigenous resources in the forestry, mining and tourism sectors," he added.

The letter was sent to Ontario Minister of Transportation Ed Fulton and federal Minister of Transport John Crosbie. Copies were sent to Ontario Premier David Peterson and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.

Pouliot also called for a commitment to double the capacity of Highway 11/17 between Nipigon and

the Manitoba border, which he felt would reduce delays and improve traffic flow in and through Northwestern Ontario.

"Many sections of this highway are badly in need of repair and present a real danger to present users," he explained. The two projects, he added, would provide much needed employment during construction and do more to open up the Mid-Canada corridor for the economic and social well being of many Canadians.

"Resource management in fish and wildlife, forestry, and fire protection would be enhanced while at the same time providing opportunities for economic development and job creation in silviculture, tourism, and the service sectors of our primary resource economy," the MPP noted.

Pouliot used the fact that the economy of the area is suffering from massive layoffs in forestry and mining as justification for his project ideas.

"Pulp, paper, saw mill and waferboard plants have drastically curtailed their operations, leaving scores of northern one-industry towns pondering their future," Pouliot said, referring in part to Terrace Bay, where earlier this year 255 permanent and 100 temporary employees lost their jobs at the Kimberly-Clark pulp mill.

The stud mill at the site is also in danger of being closed down, due to recent softwood tariffs imposed by the United States.

"Your leadership in these worth-

while projects would do more to create confidence and demonstrate faith in our collective ability to take advantage of obvious opportunities, and will be anxiously awaited and greatly appreciated by all residents of northwestern Ontario," the MPP

said. Pouliot serves as the Transportation Critic for the New Democratic Party at Queen's Park, where he represents the Terrace Bay-Schreiber area.

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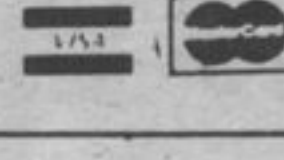
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