

For Immediate Release

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Caribou and Economy Win with New Hydro Line Route in NW ON

Group applauds decision to avoid intact boreal forests

TORONTO –CPAWS Wildlands League, a leading conservation group in the province, applauds a decision today by Minister Brad Duguid to re-route a permanent transmission line in north-western Ontario along existing roads and infrastructure. In particular, the group is pleased that healthy intact Boreal Forests and habitat for threatened caribou populations will be avoided.

“It’s a win for Ontario’s pocketbook and a win for critters, parks and waterways,” says Janet Sumner, Executive Director. “It is comforting to know that when our decision-makers weigh their duty to endangered species and to advancing economic growth, that they can find a middle way, a path where the environment and the economy prosper,” Sumner adds. “After all, the re-routed line will be cheaper to build than the original route proposed.”

Today Minister Duguid released Ontario’s Long-Term Energy Plan. In it the plan states: “A new transmission line to Pickle Lake— one of this plan’s five priority projects — will help to service the new mining load and help to enable future connections north of Pickle Lake. Subject to cost contributions from benefiting parties, Ontario will focus on supplying Pickle Lake from the Ignace/Dryden area immediately.”

The northern section of Hydro One’s original route would have severed caribou habitat in Wabikimi Provincial Park from the intact habitat further north. It is widely acknowledged that Wabakimi is not nearly big enough to support healthy caribou populations and as one scientist lamented, this new permanent disturbance would have only helped “to hasten the demise of caribou in this part of Ontario”. With today’s announcement, this is no longer a risk. An option that twins existing roads and infrastructure from Ignace/Dryden prevailed over charting through pristine Boreal Forests.

“We are over the moon,” says Anna Baggio, Director Conservation Land Use Planning. “We thank Minister Duguid and Ontario for bringing 21st century leadership to 21st century challenges, like endangered species habitat and electrical transmission,” Baggio adds. “This sets a strong precedent for Ontario that we hope can be applied to other resource sectors broadly.”

CPAWS is a signatory to the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement along with other environmental groups and major forest companies, which is aimed at joint leadership in the Boreal Forest. Finding thoughtful solutions for caribou and the economy is part of CPAWS’ nationwide Boreal woodland caribou conservation campaign.

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For further information please visit www.wildlandsleague.org and contact:

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