



## MEDIA RELEASE



Date: February XX, 2024  
For Immediate Release

### **Northern Ontario Women's Caucus: The Power of One Voice in Politics**

**Timmins, ON** – The Northern Ontario Women's (NOW) Caucus began as a conversation over a year ago between two mayors, both women and both elected to serve their community. Mayor Michelle Boileau of Timmins and Mayor Cheryl Fort of Hornepayne recognized that the support they were looking for as municipal leaders, was a shared experience for women in office.

NOW has since grown to over 21 participants, all mayors of Northern Ontario communities. Formal membership is currently being offered to elected officials in Northern Ontario, who identify as women, and who want to lead the conversation on priorities and issues that are directly affecting women in the northern region.

The group recently met at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) conference in Toronto to establish the caucus' terms of reference, mission and vision. The mission – to create an alliance of women municipal representatives across Northern Ontario, [and] to create and preserve space for women in municipal politics, as every voice matters.

NOW's membership includes women with diverse professional backgrounds in economic development, locomotive engineering, skilled trades training, health care, employment services, marketing, business management, and more. Many have multi-year experience on municipal council. The opportunity to support each other professionally, to develop leadership skills, and to increase the number of women participating in local politics, is invaluable. It sets a foundation from which NOW can advocate, support, and improve the quality of life in Northern Ontario.

NOW's goal is to not only amplify the voice of women in Northern Ontario, but to speak as one voice that is focused on building positive relationships for the communities it represents. The group is looking to work together and with federal and provincial partners to bring women's perspective to the challenges and opportunities facing each community.

Moving forward, NOW is expected to meet quarterly. The group is working to formalize membership, an election procedure for an executive committee, and to develop a strategic plan that identifies common priorities. With a vision of becoming, "a strong network of women shaping the future of Northern Ontario communities", NOW is gaining momentum and has the motivation to legitimize the role of women in politics.

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#### Quotes:

"Strong and resilient women applaud, uphold, and have other each others' backs. Impact happens when entire societies celebrate women and stand with them in equality. NOW is committed to forging women's economic empowerment; supporting women and girls into leadership; designing and building infrastructure that meets the needs of women and girls; and, helping women and girls make informed

decisions about their health. We can make Northern Ontario one of the best places to live for women!" ~  
*Mayor Cheryl Fort, Hornpayne*

"There is power in standing together as women, united in our commitment to serve and represent our respective communities. The female voice in politics is important because it reflects the unique challenges and opportunities women and girls experience. It's invaluable to bring that perspective forward, and to bring that perspective into focus. NOW allows municipal leaders to work together to inform decision-making and help develop policies to improve, not only the lives of women in Northern Ontario, but the quality of life for all residents. I'm excited to see what NOW can accomplish. Let's be heard. Let's make change. Let's celebrate our success." ~ *Mayor Michelle Boileau, Timmins*

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