



For Immediate Release

## New Commentary looks at Airships as an Alternative Method of Transportation for Northern Ontario

**December 5, 2017** – Over the coming weeks, Northern Policy Institute (NPI) will be publishing a series of commentaries in response to Ontario's [Draft 2041 Northern Ontario Multimodal Transportation Strategy](#). Recommendations found within the commentaries, Actions to move Northern Ontario forward, relate directly to goals outlined in the draft document.

"NPI recognizes the importance of an innovative, diverse transportation strategy that takes all communities into account," said NPI President and CEO Charles Cirtwill. "As part of our role to propose evidence based, practical solutions that support the sustainable development of Ontario's northern regions, we've put forward this series of action items that outline concrete next steps that the public and private sectors can use to inform the implementation and management of transportation policies over the coming decades."

The second commentary of the series, *Alternative Methods of Transportation – Airships*, by author Dr. Barry Prentice focuses on the opportunities that exist with the testing and development of airships in the Far North.

"It is a positive sign that the NOMTS addresses the need for exploration of new technologies for the movement of goods in the Far North, but the specific action items identified in the strategy are general and could be developed in more detail," states author Dr. Barry Prentice. "The economic impact on the Far North of cargo airships would be very significant because the cost of food transport could be reduced by half, and similarly all other building materials and economic developments would become more affordable."

Below is a summary of recommendations. To read the full report, visit [www.northernpolicy.ca](http://www.northernpolicy.ca)

- 1) Conduct a thorough study of the various alternative methods of transportation to assess their potential in Northern Ontario and determine the stage of the industry.
- 2) Assess the range of airship developments worldwide and choose two to three cargo airship designs for more extensive testing and development.
- 3) Study the infrastructure requirements needed to allow airships to function to their full potential and identify opportunities for private sector participation in the development of this infrastructure (where possible).
- 4) Identify the appropriate size, location and cost of a public airdock to support the airship industry.
- 5) Construct a public airdock in conjunction with one or more of the Northern Ontario universities to test and adapt airship technology to operate in frigid temperature conditions.



- 6) Assess the economic impact on the Near North of setting up a manufacturing location to build airships that are designed to operate year-round in the Far North.

Upcoming topics include *Marine Tourism – Cabotage*.

**Media Interviews:** Author, Dr. Barry Prentice and NPI President & CEO, Charles Cirtwill are both available for comment. To arrange an interview, please contact:

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#### **About Northern Policy Institute:**

Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent think tank. We perform research, collect and disseminate evidence, and identify policy opportunities to support the growth of sustainable Northern communities. Our operations are located in Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, and Sudbury. We seek to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts Northern Ontario, Ontario, and Canada as a whole.

#### **About the author:**

**Dr. Barry Prentice** is a Professor of Supply Chain Management, at the I.H. Asper School of Business, University of Manitoba and the former Director (1996-2005) of the Transport Institute. His major research and teaching interests include logistics, transportation economics, urban transport and trade policy. Dr. Prentice holds a degree in economics from University of Western Ontario (1973) and graduate degrees in agricultural economics from University of Guelph (1979) and University of Manitoba (1986).

Through the Transport Institute, Dr. Prentice has organized national and international conferences on sustainable transportation (Railways and the Environment), supply chain logistics (Planes, Trains & Ships), agribusiness logistics (Fields on Wheels), the potential use of airships for northern transportation (Airships to the Arctic) and food trade between Canada and Mexico (La Cadena de Frio).

Dr. Prentice is a Fellow in Transportation at Northern Policy Institute and the President of ISO Polar Airships that he co-founded in 2005 as a not-for-profit research institute to promote the use of airships as sustainable transport for the northern latitudes.