



For Immediate Release

“Sioux Lookout Model” could serve to help airports across region

December 17, 2015 – The latest briefing note released by Northern Policy Institute looks at a new airport funding model that could ensure remote communities remain viable and economically competitive. Prepared by former Northern Policy Institute intern, Erin Estok, **Is the North Being Grounded? The Case for Intergovernmental Investment in Northern Ontario’s Airports**, argues that an intergovernmental investment partnership model will help enhance airport infrastructures in the region.

“In order to harness the maximum economic benefit from resource opportunities such as the proposed Ring of Fire in Northern Ontario, multi-modal transportation links must be planned in advance,” Estok writes. “Air access is often one of the main criteria that is used by industry leaders when evaluating whether or not to locate a new project in a given community.”

Airports in the north, particularly small airports in remote communities, have been struggling financially since the mid-1990s when the federal government handed operations and maintenance responsibilities of airport facilities to local airport authorities.

“Stakeholders in the aviation industry state that smaller airports struggle with insufficient revenues to cover operating expenses, have limited sources for funding capital projects, and suffer from reduced revenues as a result of traffic diversions from increased fees and taxes on aviation,” Estok writes.

According to Estok, a \$12.6 million joint investment partnership between federal, provincial, and municipal governments in 2015 to enhance the Sioux Lookout Airport infrastructure is a funding model that should be applied to airports throughout the region.

“The reasons for strategic investments of this nature in the region are numerous and include the efficient movement of people and goods for natural resources projects, as well as the provision of core public services to residents in the North,” writes Estok. “Injecting money and resources into other smaller airports in Northern Ontario is an investment that will facilitate further growth in the region. Intergovernmental collaboration on infrastructure projects, such as airports, will help get the North off the ground and reach new heights.”

You can read the full briefing note, **Is the North Being Grounded? The Case for Intergovernmental Investment in Northern Ontario’s Airports**, on our website at www.northernpolicy.ca.

Media Interviews: Author, Erin Estok, is 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 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.