

For Immediate Release

Northern Ontario is growing, in places

March 25, 2015, Thunder Bay, ON – A new report and video podcast released by Northern Policy Institute shows the close relationship between Northern Ontario’s overall declining population and the struggling primary industry sector. The report, *Diversify, Innovate, Invest...and Grow*, was researched and written by Julien Bonin and examines the trends in population throughout the 11 census districts in Northern Ontario from 2001 to 2013.

According to the report, the districts of Sudbury, Rainy River, Cochrane, Timiskaming, Algoma, and Thunder Bay saw declines in population, while Kenora, Greater Sudbury, Manitoulin, Parry Sound, and Nipissing saw some growth.

“Cumulative population change from 2001 to 2013 demonstrates that six of the 11 Northern Ontario districts experience a decline in population,” the report states. “Much of the decline can be connected to a reliance on the primary sectors.”

The report highlights that growth occurred in more diversified economies where there were early efforts at innovation in primary industries, investment in major infrastructure, and higher birth rates among Aboriginal populations.

The changing economic mix in the Nipissing district, the growth of the service and retail sectors in Greater Sudbury, and high birthrates in Kenora and Manitoulin are all noted as contributors to population growth. The report also highlights recent innovations in forest product production and resulting new opportunities in the region.

The report concludes that between 2001-2013 “Northern Ontario’s population fluctuations can largely be associated with the boom and busts of the primary industry sectors such as forestry and mining. With reliance on these sectors significantly reduced future trends are harder to predict. It is clear that economic opportunity and population remain closely connected.”

The report is accompanied by a video podcast prepared by Northern Policy Institute, which provides a new way to share information and data with the people of Northern Ontario. Northern Policy Institute is working to create more podcasts in the future.

To read the full report and view the video podcast, visit www.northernpolicy.ca.

Media Interviews: Northern Policy Institute president and CEO, Charles Cirtwill, 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.

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