

For Immediate Release

In the Pursuit of a Nation Rebuilding Model for Canada

November 17, 2022 – In a collaborative approach, Animbiigoo Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek, Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek, and Lac des Mille Lacs First Nation are seeking to rebuild from the ground up. The process of how to do so and other opportunities for First Nations' prosperity are explored in the *Nation Rebuilding Series*, Northern Policy Institute's latest release.

This series of 12 research papers was conducted in partnership with Animbiigoo Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek, Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek, Lac des Mille Lacs First Nation, and Northern Policy Analytics.

Findings show that setting up an urban reserve could be a once-in-a-generation opportunity to set a new economic course for First Nations' citizens – although it will take a decade or longer to capitalize on its full potential. Funding availability, Crown engagement and other governments, the purpose of the urban reserve (commercial, residential, mix) and others are all decisions the First Nations involved will explore.

While current funding pools are available, challenges exist such as First Nations' administrative burden as well as program inflexibility in how funding is used. However, new avenues to work with the federal government could be possible to access funding such as creating a multi-year funding agreement for an Indigenous commercial incubator, establishing a revenue-sharing agreement, and involving First Nations in municipal and provincial joint ventures, including those in health and education.

Community ownership of high-cost infrastructure projects, flexible designs for ongoing modification, and hiring labour from communities are just some of the best practices when it comes to building infrastructure. Innovative case studies of energy, housing, water, transportation, and public buildings are included from across Canada. The series also finds that to achieve best outcomes on funding this infrastructure, First Nations need to be prepared to utilize more than one funding model – P3s, corporate funding, and monetization, to name a few.

"We want to do this right. This means poring over the details, what would work best for our Nations, what is going to last several generations down the road and then some," said Tony Maunula, Director of Strategic Initiatives at Lac des Mille Lacs First Nation. "I believe the collaborative approach we are taking in this project can be transformative for us and others across Canada."

Want to learn more? Read the series here: <https://www.northernpolicy.ca/nation-rebuilding-series>

Media Interviews: Author Dr. Kenneth Coates and NPI President & CEO Charles Cirtwill are 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, evidence-driven think tank. We perform research, analyze data, and disseminate ideas. Our mission is to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts our communities, our province, our country, and our world. Based in Thunder Bay, Sudbury, and Kirkland Lake; NPI is active in every region of Northern Ontario. During the summer months we have satellite offices in communities across Northern Ontario staffed by teams of Experience North placements. These placements are university and college students working in your community on issues important to you and your neighbours.

About Animiigoo Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek:

Our people have been present in these lands for time immemorial. Our ancestors were strong, independent people, as we are today, who moved with the seasons throughout a large area of land around Lake Nipigon. We governed ourselves using the traditional teachings we still teach our children today. Now, our community members widely scattered throughout many communities, the majority of which are located in northwestern Ontario in and around the shores of Lake Superior. We are unified by our connection to the environment, our commitment to our traditional values, and our respect for each other.

About Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek:

The people of Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek – formerly known as Sand Point First Nation – have been occupying the southeast shores of Lake Nipigon since time immemorial. Our community is dedicated to fostering a strong cultural identity, protecting Mother Earth, and to providing equal opportunities for all. Furthermore, our community vision is to grow Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek's economy and become recognized as a sustainable and supportive community where businesses succeed, members thrive, and culture is celebrated.

About Lac des Mille Lacs First Nation:

The community of Lac des Mille Lacs First Nation is located in Northwestern Ontario, 135 km West of Thunder Bay, and encompasses roughly 5,000 HA of Mother Nature's most spectacular beauty. Our people have held and cared for our Lands and Traditional Territories since time immemorial. To fulfill our purpose and in our journey towards our vision, we, the Lac Des Mille Lacs First Nation are committed to rebuilding a strong sense of community following a holistic approach and inclusive processes for healthy community development.

About Northern Policy Analytics:

Northern Policy Analytics (NPA) is a community-inspired applied policy and research consulting firm based in the Yukon and Saskatchewan. Founded by Drs. Ken Coates and Greg Finnegan in response to rapidly changing conditions and opportunities in the Canadian North, NPA recognizes that Northern and Indigenous communities often experience poorer educational outcomes, higher unemployment rates, receive fewer public goods and services, and lack the economic stability needed to optimize community well-being and quality of life. Yet these communities are often located in direct proximity to some of Canada's most valuable natural resources, resulting in both opportunity and conflict.