



## **Federal Government Announces Funding of Wataynikaneyap Power's Project to Connect First Nation to Ontario's Power Grid**

**THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO** (Marketwired – August 17, 2017) – Today’s funding announcement of up to \$60 million by the Government of Canada to connect Pikangikum First Nation to Ontario’s power grid is being welcomed by all First Nations who are part of the larger transmission project known as Wataynikaneyap Power.

Canada’s Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, says today’s funding commitment means that Pikangikum First Nation can now look forward to clean, reliable and accessible power – something the community has been lacking for decades.

“The connection of Pikangikum First Nation to the Ontario electrical grid will mark a significant achievement,” says Minister Bennett. “Together, First Nation, federal and provincial partners are making progress in creating lasting improvements to the quality of life in Pikangikum First Nation, improving health and safety, and opening the door for future economic development.”

Like so many remote First Nations communities in Northwestern Ontario, Pikangikum has relied on diesel to power its community. Without access to reliable power, everything from education, health services, to safe drinking water and the ability to connect new homes and build other critical infrastructure has been hampered. Over 80% of existing homes are without water and sewer service. The fuel-intensive diesel generating station has been operating at capacity since 2010, leaving the community to struggle with constant power outages and several catastrophic generator failures.

“This is the best news I’ve heard in a long time - the community really needs this,” says Chief Dean Owen. “I would like to thank Minister Bennett for her support to the community. Now we need to get the line in as soon as possible. This means that Pikangikum can move forward with infrastructure, economic development and community growth. And now that Wataynikaneyap Power has achieved this success, we can focus on the rest of the remote First Nation communities being connected.”

The Pikangikum Power Line Project, expected to provide an estimated 110 jobs, has been fast tracked and construction on the 117km line from Red Lake is expected to begin in October 2017, with a targeted completion in November 2018. With minor upgrades in the future, the power line could be used to connect other remote First Nations communities north of the community.

The Pikangikum Power Line Project is part of the 1800km Wataynikaneyap Transmission Project, an unprecedented First Nations led project that will connect remote First Nations communities to the provincial grid. The partnership of Wataynikaneyap Power is equally owned by 22 First Nation communities (51%), who partnered with an experienced industry leader, Fortis (49%). 17 of these communities are currently living off the grid, relying on very expensive diesel to power their homes and businesses – a situation that has become financially unsustainable, environmentally risky, and inadequate to meet community needs.

The decision to fund the Pikangikum Power Line Project on an expedited basis now lends momentum to the larger Wataynikaneyap Transmission Project – a transformational project that promises to be one of the most significant infrastructure projects in Ontario’s history.

“Investing upwards of \$60 million to bring reliable energy to Pikangikum will enhance sustainable socio-economic initiatives that the community have been struggling to develop for many years,” says Margaret Kenequanash, CEO for Wataynikaneyap Power. “It will help build and improve community development, infrastructure and housing that will provide stability in Pikangikum. I am thinking about the children, the Elders and the overall community on what this means to them. I am excited and welcome this commitment from both levels of government.”

“Today’s announcement is a major step forward for the Pikangikum Power Line Project and moves it from the development to the construction stage,” says Scott Hawkes, President and CEO of FortisOntario Inc. and Wataynikaneyap Power PM. “As Project Manager we are pleased for the Pikangikum First Nation community members, as this funding shows the commitment by the Federal government on making this line become a reality.”

#### **About Wataynikaneyap Power:**

Wataynikaneyap Power is a licensed transmission company equally owned by 22 First Nation communities (51%), in partnership with Fortis Inc. (49%). FortisOntario Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Fortis Inc., and an electricity transmission and distribution utility holding company based in Ontario, has a 49% interest in the general partner of Wataynikaneyap Power and owns 100% of Wataynikaneyap Power PM Inc., the project manager. To connect remote First Nations communities to the electrical grid, Wataynikaneyap Power will develop and operate approximately 1,800 kilometers of 230 kV, 115 kV, and 44 kV lines in northwestern Ontario. When complete, the project is expected to save over \$1 billion over the next 40 years compared to continued diesel generation. The project will also result in over 6.6 million tonnes of avoided CO2 greenhouse gas emissions, increase economic development opportunities and improve the social and living conditions for remote community residents. More information about Wataynikaneyap Power can be found at [www.wataypower.ca](http://www.wataypower.ca)

#### **About FortisOntario:**

FortisOntario Inc. is an electric utility, which owns and operates Canadian Niagara Power Inc., Cornwall Street Railway Light & Power Company Ltd. and Algoma Power Inc., serving a combined 65,000 customers. FortisOntario Inc. also owns regulated transmission assets with approximately 3,430 km of distribution and transmission lines. FortisOntario Inc. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Fortis Inc. (“Fortis”) (TSX: FTS) a leader in the North American regulated electric and gas utility business, with total assets of approximately CAD\$48 billion and fiscal 2016 revenue of CAD\$6.8 billion serving more than 3.2 million

customers across Canada, the United States and the Caribbean. For more information, visit [www.fortisinc.com](http://www.fortisinc.com) or [www.sedar.com](http://www.sedar.com).

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