

August 15, 2018

Sharon Hayes
Field Unit Superintendent for Northern Ontario
Pukaskwa National Park
PO Box 212 Hwy 627
Heron Bay ON P0T 1R0

Via fax: 807-229-2097

Dear Ms. Hayes,

RE: Re-affirming maintenance and restoration of ecological integrity as the first priority in managing all aspects of Pukaskwa National Park and rejecting any renewed or replaced transmission within the Park

CPAWS Wildlands League is writing today to request that you (1) re-affirm maintenance and restoration of ecological integrity as the first priority in managing all aspects of Pukaskwa National Park and (2) re-affirm Parks Canada's 2014 decision to reject any study of proposals, including from Hydro One, to renew or replace existing transmission through the Park.

In May of this year, the Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, and Minister responsible for Parks Canada issued a formal declaration¹ reaffirming that "ecological integrity is the first priority in considering all aspects of management of national parks – through focused investments, limiting development, and by working with Indigenous peoples, provinces and territories." We welcome and support this statement as it reflects our long standing position too.

Wildlands League has been following the planning for East-West Tie Expansion Project. We shared our view over five years ago directly with proponent Nextbridge Infrastructure that any proposed transmission line must avoid Pukaskwa National Park in order to maintain and restore the ecological integrity of the Park. We were pleased to see the proponent's preferred route avoid the national park. This is also consistent with Parks Canada's direction in 2014 to not allow a study of a route through the Park by then Acting Field Superintendent R. Lessard (see attached letter by Mr. Lessard). This was and still is the correct course of action. Limiting development in the park is what's needed at this time.

We are frustrated to learn that a new proposal² has come forward by Hydro One and is now being considered by Parks Canada. This proposed project would delay restoration of the Park's ecological integrity and ultimately lead to more fragmentation and disturbance within the Park. This is not in the

¹ See <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/minister-mckenna-affirms-ecological-integrity-is-the-first-priority-in-the-management-of-parks-canada-681944261.html>

² See <https://www.hydroone.com/about/corporate-information/major-projects/lake-superior-link>

public interest and not consistent with the first priority of maintaining and restoring ecological integrity. A decision made within an ecological integrity first framework would reject the line through the park, including a proposal to renew or replace existing transmission, because it would be moving park management in the wrong direction on the ecological integrity continuum. Instead, Parks Canada must think about how to phase out the existing transmission line so the Park's ecological integrity can be restored, allowing the Park to fulfill its proper role in helping to preserve the nation's biodiversity.

As you know, Canada is not immune to the biodiversity crisis gripping the planet. Our national parks are key anchors in our country's protected areas network and we cannot allow them to continue to be degraded. We need them and other new protected areas if we are going to reverse the decline of biodiversity and meet our obligations under the Convention for Biological Diversity. Wildlands League strongly urges you to limit development within the Park, re-affirm maintenance and restoration of ecological integrity as the first priority for Park management, and phase out the existing transmission line so that the corridor and Park's ecological integrity can be restored.

Please feel free to call me if you have any questions or comments. I look forward to speedy resolution of our concerns.

Sincerely,



Anna Baggio
Director Conservation Planning

Cc: Hon. Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks Canada
Gilles Seutin, Chief Scientist, Parks Canada

Encl.