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Today at 11:43

## New report brings significant provincial issues to attention of federal parties LOCAL



Matt Vis, tbnnews.com

Northern Policy Institute president Charles Cirtwill

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By Matt Vis, tbnnews.com

THUNDER BAY - The president of the Northern Policy Institute says it's time the federal government starts paying more attention to Ontario.

That's what Charles Cirtwill said in response to 'A Federal Economic Agenda for Ontario,' a report released on Monday by the Mowat Centre in partnership with the Northern Policy Institute that provided 33 recommendations across six key issue areas.

"Ontario has a unique economic circumstance that is different from Alberta, different from British Columbia, that's different from the Maritimes," Cirtwill said, pointing out many other areas of the province seem to receive special attention in developing major projects.

"The case is that Ontario still remains a huge part of the national economy, a huge part of the national population so you look at opportunities like the Ring of Fire, impacts of climate change on water levels in the Great Lakes, issues of immigration, what's going on in the (Greater Toronto Area) and what's going on in our own communities...It's time for the federal parties to look specifically at Ontario issues and tell us what they're going to do for us."



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The findings were generated based on consultations with policy experts from across the province, as well as with Northern Ontario residents through the Northern Policy institute.

The report will be distributed to each of the federal party leaders as well as every candidate in a Northern Ontario riding.

Cirtwill said the timing of the report is designed to highlight issues in advance of the federal election so the parties get a sense of the important issues.

"Now they have a list of suggestions that says these are the problems facing the people living in Ontario, here's a list of solutions we know that work," he said.

The report identified infrastructure spending, the need for Aboriginal educational and skills development programs, a re-evaluation of the assessment of long-term impacts of FedNor funding and for the federal government to take a stronger leadership position on the Ring of Fire.

Another key finding from the report is that technological infrastructure across the North needs to be enhanced.

"The fact I can still drive from Thunder Bay to Kenora or Thunder Bay to Sudbury and my cellphone doesn't work half the time, that's a real problem," Cirtwill said.

"Today's modern tourist, for example, their kids all have electronic devices. They want those things to work when they're riding in the back of the camper or the back of the car."

The full report [can be read online](#).

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