



Office of the Mayor | Bureau du maire

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If We Want to Build a Stronger Canada and Protect Ontario, We Must Empower Greater Sudbury

In today's world, national defence is no longer defined solely by borders and battalions. It is defined by supply chains, energy security, and control over the critical minerals that power advanced defence systems, modern infrastructure, and clean technology.

Allies and competitors alike are racing to secure these resources because they underpin economic strength, national security, and technological leadership. From the nickel that hardens military equipment and strengthens critical infrastructure to the copper that powers advanced grids, radar systems, and next-generation batteries, these minerals are essential to the modern world.

Many of those critical minerals are found, refined, and advanced right here in Greater Sudbury. They do not stay here. They go to work for all of Canada and our allies, making this community a critical front in a global race over who controls the industries and technologies of the future.

Other countries understand what is at stake. The United States and China are spending billions to secure their own supply. As global competition intensifies, every delay increases our vulnerability. Losing control of critical minerals is not a hypothetical risk. It is a real threat to our sovereignty.

If Canada and Ontario are serious about protecting their economic independence in an era of geopolitical instability and trade uncertainty, they must designate Greater Sudbury as a Special Economic Zone.

Greater Sudbury is one of the country's most nationally significant critical mineral hubs. Within the next five years, we will grow from 9 to 15 mines within our municipal boundaries, not including additional operations just outside our borders that rely on our workforce, infrastructure, and services.

Our city spans a land mass the size of Prince Edward Island. We maintain more than 3,600 kilometres of roads and a network of water and wastewater systems that serve our communities and support a broader industrial ecosystem. These services and amenities make it possible to attract and retain the skilled workforce the mining sector depends on.

This is not a choice we made. It is the reality of being the community Canada relies on to get these minerals out of the ground. Yet our municipal funding model was never designed to carry a responsibility of this scale.

Greater Sudbury residents are providing the infrastructure backbone for a multi-billion-dollar industry with a population of roughly 190,000 people. Nearly a third of Northern Ontario's GDP comes from Greater Sudbury, yet the vast majority of mining royalties generated here flow to Toronto and Ottawa. Only a small fraction returns to the community that makes that prosperity possible. The result is a growing and unfair burden on local taxpayers.

For more than a century, the wealth created here has helped pay for highways, transit systems, arenas, and national programs across this province and country. The cost of maintaining the infrastructure that generates that wealth has stayed here, with us. That imbalance is outdated, unsustainable, and no longer strategically sound.

A Special Economic Zone designation is the practical solution. It would ensure a fairer share of the wealth generated in Greater Sudbury is reinvested in Greater Sudbury, in roads, housing, water systems, and workforce development. It would also help ease pressure on housing and social services in a city growing quickly to meet Canada's supply chain needs.

This is not a handout. The province's Special Economic Zones framework and the federal government's Building Canada initiatives exist for moments exactly like this. We are asking them to use those tools here and now.

This designation would also strengthen our partnerships with Indigenous communities, who have been essential to responsible resource development in this region. Greater Sudbury lies on the traditional lands of Atikameksheng Anishnawbek and Wahnapiitae First Nation, and we have become a model for advancing major projects through genuine partnership.

A Special Economic Zone status would provide the fiscal capacity to deepen that work and ensure shared prosperity. The fact is, Greater Sudbury has been carrying a national responsibility on a local budget for generations. We did not wait for someone else to make the case. We made it ourselves.

Building a stronger Canada and protecting Ontario requires strengthening the communities that make that security and sovereignty possible. Greater Sudbury is one of those communities. It is time we were treated like it.

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