



Premiers committed to working together to safeguard prosperity, now and into the future

HAINES JUNCTION, YUKON (May 3, 2025) – Premier Ranj Pillai welcomed Premier R.J. Simpson and Premier P.J. Akeeagok to Haines Junction, Yukon, for the annual Northern Premiers' Forum. Premiers appreciated the opportunity to meet with and learn from First Nation and local leaders, Elders and community members. They experienced the stunning landscape and vibrant culture at the edge of the St. Elias mountains on the Traditional Territory of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

Premiers wish to extend their congratulations to Prime Minister Mark Carney on his election victory. The three territorial Premiers look forward to working in close collaboration on advancing common goals and working to improve the lives of territorial residents and all Canadians.

During their time together, Premiers discussed important issues impacting the territories, including Arctic security and sovereignty, growing the economy, critical infrastructure, and the health and wellbeing of northern people and communities. They also met with local leaders and Canadian Rangers.

Premiers reiterated their commitment to work together to create a long-term, prosperous future for territorial residents and all of Canada. They called for meaningful action to connect the country from coast to coast to coast in collaboration with Indigenous partners to strengthen Canadian sovereignty and fully realize the territories' economic potential.

Northern connections to the world

Premiers discussed the changing global trade landscape and the territories' role in strengthening territorial and Canadian economic interests and maintaining positive international relations to strategically position the territories in a rapidly evolving world. Premiers recognize that they are at a pivotal moment to better connect the three territories to the world. Communities, Indigenous governments and development corporations need to be engaged to ensure Northerners benefit from new developments. Collaborative, nation-building investments will create opportunities for Northerners, advance reconciliation, support the wider geopolitical interests of Canadians, and position Canada to build strong reciprocal relationships with international trading partners.

Premiers noted that Canada's strength and sovereignty in the Arctic is rooted in the people, culture and communities across the territories. Premiers underscored the importance of increasing Canada's defence spending, including meeting the NATO two percent target as soon as possible. They discussed the economic opportunities of investing in Arctic security and the need for those investments to benefit the communities, businesses and people in the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. They are united that decisions and actions taken by the federal government to strengthen Arctic security and sovereignty must be guided by northern voices and directly benefit the communities in which investments are made.

Growing the economy

Premiers discussed the urgency to advance major strategic nation-building and critical infrastructure projects in the three territories. Home to key resources important to Canada's economic future, Premiers agreed that significant, dedicated federal investments are needed to unlock the economic potential of the territories. Premiers called on the Government of Canada to work collaboratively to invest in infrastructure, housing, critical minerals and energy projects, as well as industries that create lasting economic opportunities, which can provide jobs and career opportunities for Northerners.

Premiers support Canada's ambition to remove internal trade barriers and enhance labour mobility in the unique context of territorial economies. They called on Canada to provide the time and resource supports required to accelerate economic development to the level of the rest of Canada. Premiers agreed to explore the creation of a territorial trade zone, recognizing modern treaties and land claims, to enhance the economic opportunities of the territories.

Premiers also discussed the need to strengthen economic corridors between the territories, including rail, port, air and highway systems. Investments in these corridors will support economic development and help realize the full potential of the territories and their contribution to Canada's economic future.

To advance economic reconciliation, Premiers emphasized the importance of Indigenous partners as equity stakeholders in nation-building projects and increasing Indigenous participation in procurement processes. Premiers called for more federal support for Indigenous governments to participate in resource development. Premiers urge the federal government to work in collaboration with territorial and Indigenous governments to improve regulatory and assessment efficiency to ensure that the territories can be full participants in critical minerals opportunities.

Balancing economic growth with environmental protection is essential. Sustainable development practices help mitigate the impact of climate change and preserve the territories' ecosystems. Engagement with Indigenous governments in economic activities ensures that development is inclusive and respects Traditional Knowledge and livelihoods.

Healthy communities

The health and well-being of Northerners remains top of mind for Premiers, particularly in addressing health inequities that exist across the three territories. Without adequate and flexible funding supports for federal programs like Non-Insured Health Benefits, Jordan's Principle or the Inuit Child First Initiative, Indigenous residents in the territories will continue to experience well-documented health and educational disparities. Premiers look forward to meaningful engagement with the Government of Canada and Indigenous partners to come up with a long-term solution that ensures quality services are readily available to all communities across the territories.

Premiers emphasized that access to sustainable, safe, affordable and quality housing that is suitable for a northern environment is vital for the long-term health and resilience of people and communities.

Premiers also discussed the alarming increase in transphobic policies based on hate and ignorance being passed internationally, stripping transgender and gender-nonconforming people of their fundamental rights to self-expression. All three territories continue to take a strong stance to support the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and are committed to ensuring all Northerners feel seen, safe and supported.

Premiers reiterated that federal policies must consider the distinct needs of the territories, including their fiscal capacity, higher costs, and large Indigenous populations. They look forward to working with the new federal government toward that shared goal.

Chair of the 2026 Northern Premiers' Forum

The Northwest Territories was confirmed as chair of the Northern Premiers' Forum for the 2026 calendar year.

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