



COUNCIL TRAVEL REPORT

For Immediate Release:

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CHIEFS OF ONTARIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY FORUM *CHIEF TESHA ROURKE*

Tsi Snaihne District Chief Tesha Rourke recently attended the Chiefs of Ontario Economic Development and Prosperity Table Meeting in Toronto, Ontario on March 28, 2025. The event focused on strengthening First Nations trade, market diversification, and economic resilience through investments in tourism, technology, and infrastructure.

Chief Rourke was joined by MCA's Director of Economic Development Kylee Tarbell.

DISCUSSION POINTS & OBJECTIVES:

Tariffs & Trade

The potential impact of new American tariffs on First Nations communities, particularly in forestry and agriculture, was discussed. Leaders emphasized the need for Canada to support First Nations businesses if these tariffs take effect.

Ontario Securities Commission (OSC) Action Plan

The OSC shared a draft of their Action Plan for Truth and Reconciliation, outlining steps to improve First Nations access to capital markets for investment and business development.

Economic Opportunities

Emphasis was placed on fostering business partnerships, diversifying markets beyond the U.S., and investing in tourism, technology, and infrastructure.

Food Sovereignty & Land

There was strong advocacy for increased access to land for agriculture, with a focus on growing more food locally and educating youth about farming and food systems.

Business Directory

A nearly completed online directory of Indigenous businesses in Ontario was introduced. This initiative aims to connect Indigenous businesses with buyers and government programs.



Youth & Digital Growth

Discussions revolved around supporting youth involvement in finance, business, and digital careers. There was also a focus on improving internet access and digital tools for First Nations communities.

NETWORKING & COLLABORATION:

- Engaged with representatives from the Ontario Securities Commission regarding their Action Plan for Truth and Reconciliation. Potential collaborations were discussed to ensure meaningful participation of First Nations in capital markets.
- Connected with leaders and economic developers focused on market diversification and investment in new industries.
- Explored partnerships with organizations promoting food sovereignty, infrastructure development, and youth career opportunities.
- Discussed the upcoming Indigenous business portal and how communities can best leverage it for economic growth.

KEY TAKEAWAYS & NEXT STEPS:

- Meet with Ontario Securities Commission to discuss the Action Plan for Truth and Reconciliation
- Keep working with partners to grow our local economy, support food security, and create jobs for our youth.
- Watch for updates about the Indigenous business portal and opportunities for training or funding.