



NOTO ADVOCACY AND PROJECTS UPDATE

2025 REPORT FOR NOTO AGM

ADVOCACY:

Provincial and Federal Elections:

- In 2025 we experienced both an early Provincial and Federal Election. During these times, NOTO put together a document highlighting some of our industry's key issues. This document was sent out to all 4 provincial political party leaders. [Click here](#) to read the letter.

Minister Meetings:

- NOTO staff had several meetings with the Minister of Northern Economic Development and Growth as well as the Minister of Natural Resources and various ministerial staff to discuss the needs of the tourism sector. Both Minister Georg Pirie and Minister Mike Harris want the tourism sector to flourish and we look forward to continuing our discussions.
- The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming reached out to us as part of their Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) work, with a request from the Emergency Management Working Group to **identify insurance issues** or concerns related to emergency management (such as natural disaster events) impacting tourism sector or operators in Ontario. Thank you to the members who took the time to provide detailed responses surrounding the substantial increase in costs, reduction in coverage and more. The information provided helped us in our submission to the Ministry.

Tariffs:

- Early in 2025, NOTO called each border crossing in the northern region to discuss how they will be implementing the tariffs and successfully advocated to allow individuals to import groceries as part of their personal exemptions without paying for tariffs. [Read more.](#)

Use of Crown Land Near RBT Operators:

- We continue to receive calls from operators who are concerned that their ability to provide quality experiences is being threatened and/or lost. Most calls involve forestry, mining, land claims, unauthorized and unmonitored use of Crown Land, road and transmission line developments.
- We continue to do our best with these individual issues and are looking to build strategies to tackle these issues at a broader level.
- At the Federal Level the Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) or Indigenous Protected Conservation Areas (IPCAS) are quickly becoming the next challenge in this area. We have reached out to the Minister of Indigenous Affairs (Prov) who has arranged for us to discuss concerns and build a relationship with his Director of Policy who has been dealing directly with IPCAs and IPAs as well as First Nations regarding treaty rights.
- We also continue discussions with provincial ministries to encourage better enforcement and effective policies to support the tourism sector.
- We are also taking steps to encourage operators to build meaningful relationships and work with local Indigenous communities. At the summit, there will be a workshop on how to build those relationships. We will also be considering webinars on this topic in the near future.

MNR Boat Cache Program Review:

- MNR staff are still in the VERY early stages of reviewing the NW Boat Cache Program. The program's main purpose was to protect the fisheries and to allow MNR to monitor how many recreational and commercial users could cache boats on lakes in the following 5 MNR Districts: Red Lake, Dryden, Kenora, Fort Frances & Sioux Lookout Districts.
- MNR was using the Public Lands Act to issue boat cache permits. They have been advised that they can no longer use the Public Lands Act to protect fisheries.



- MNR is considering eliminating the Boat Cache Program completely which would mean moving commercial operators to 5 or 10 year LUPs as is done in the rest of the province. Recreational boaters wouldn't need a permit to cache boats on lakes. Commercial operators located within provincial parks will still need to deal with MECP for their permits.
- We asked our members for their feedback and we heard the following loud and clear: [Read more.](#)
- On November 6th, 2025 MNR posted a proposal; [Natural Resources Regulatory and Permit Reform Initiative: Unlocking Ontario's Economic Potential](#) There is an opportunity to provide comment through the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) on boat caches and other MNR permitting before December 22nd.

Bear:

- NOTO co-hosted three ADAPT webinars in collaboration with Tourism Excellence North for bear outfitters where MNR shared draft concepts for the new proposed allocation systems. Over 80 bear operators attended these webinars.
- MNR continues to do as much internal work as they can on this file in the meantime. We will keep operators informed as soon as the posting is up on the ERO. We encourage bear operators to review and submit comments.
- In recent discussions with MNR staff we reiterated the need to limit resident hunters if population objectives are to be met. We also reiterated the need for a phased in approach where allocations either decrease or increase once the new policies are implemented.
- MNR also held a discussion on bear in-person at the Northern Ontario Tourism Summit.
- Our discussions with MNR over the next several months will focus on how to mitigate the blow for those operators who will lose allocations. We will need to ensure that we consider the negative impacts on the businesses as well as on wildlife species.

Moose:

Moose Research Project in WMU 13:

- The research project focuses on several variables influencing moose populations (hunting, predation, illegal harvest, animal health, forestry activity, etc.). We are optimistic that information provided through this project will better inform moose management, including our working relationship with the MNR.
- NOTO held a few webinars where MNR provided updates to our members.
- We also held a moose session at the Northern Ontario Tourism Summit. It was one of the best attended sessions with lots of good discussion between MNR and attendees.

NOTO Moose Operator Survey:

- 85 moose operators participated in NOTO's 2024-2025 moose survey.
- The data was clear that cuts have had a great impact on operators.
- We are currently conducting a 2025-2026 survey to ensure we have the most up-to-date data.
- We encourage all operators to share the link with operators offering moose hunts:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VH2JYFJ>

Moose Allocations:

- We have heard from operators who are experiencing additional cuts in their moose allocations for 2026. We continue to have meaningful discussions and to present data to the Ministry that highlights the true economic value of the moose hunt offered through the tourism industry and just how much cuts impact operators.
- We are encouraging all operators to write letters to the Minister of Natural Resources, and to cc the Minister of Tourism, NOTO, and the chair of BGMAC highlighting how these cuts impact their businesses.
- As a result of these on-going cuts, we are conducting a follow-up survey to the one done last year to ensure that our data remains up-to-date as we continue discussions with Government.



Flight Duty Times:

- 2025 was a challenging year for this file as the Federal Minister of Transportation changed four times.
- NOTO continues to work with and lead the Coalition of Northern Air Services & Stakeholders (CNASS) in discussion with Transport Canada.
- In March, it looked like the proposed global exemption which included the recommendations made by CNASS were going to pass. [Click here](#) to see the March announcement.
- However, inputs from unions of 705 operators (which includes larger commercial air carriers like Air Canada) led Transport Canada to stall on implementation. The recommendations brought forward to the Ministry were never intended to be implemented as a one-size-fits-all approach, but specifically for small aircraft used predominantly in Northern and remote communities across Canada.
- CNASS initiated a letter writing campaign to urge the Government to implement the global exemption. The coalition also continues to seek a meeting with Minister Freeland and her staff.
- Minister Freeland then stepped down from her role as Minister of Transportation. This further stalled the implementation of the flight duty global exemptions.
- A letter including a request for a meeting has been prepared for the new Minister Steven McKinnon and members of the Coalition continue reaching out to Conservative MPs to help put pressure on the Government to push this forward.
- We have heard that a Minister's decision on global exemption is imminent. (Nov 2025)

CITIES Permits:

- We have heard that there are several delays and issues regarding the approval of CITIES permits which have caused some concerns with individuals looking to export their harvested meat. We have reached out to the Federal Government to discuss this. We have no new updates on this file as of yet.

Border Waters & US Angling Guide Issues:

- NOTO continues to support operators, municipalities and First Nation Communities seeking changes to Federal regulations that allow non-resident angling guides to obtain work permits to bring unregistered US resort guests into Canadian waters to fish.
- NOTO and the working group for this issue created a briefing note highlighting the need for better monitoring of the border waters activity for public safety and security of our border. This issue has generated growing concern for the increasing pressure on our Canadian fisheries in addition to the lack of benefits to Canada as no funds remain in Canada.
- NOTO has also written a letter to Premier Ford and the Federal Government surrounding the issue of US Guides fishing in Canadian waters.
- This group continues to meet and look for possible solutions to the problem.
- The Remote Area Border Crossing Permits may be a way to ensure screening of individuals prior to entry to determine admissibility. It could also serve as a deterrent to use US guides to enter Canada to fish only.
- Concerns also include the fact that non-resident anglers who use the services of a US angling guide with a work permit are not required to check in at any border crossing before entering Canada. Public safety and environmental concerns like bringing in aquatic invasive species are some of the concerns for this gap in border security.
- NOTO developed a communication piece on behalf of the border waters working group that was sent out to key ministers at the Provincial and Federal levels.
- NOTO has recently drafted a press release for the group as requested. The goal is to get a response from the Federal Government.
- The Provincial government is taking steps to help but the regulations we need changed lie with the Federal Government.
- We continue to encourage businesses to write letters to share their concerns and support our efforts. We encourage writers to include our recommendations. Click [HERE](#) to download the template. **Page 3 of 7**
- NOTO has made a submission on behalf of the coalition to the consultation on CUSMA through Global Affairs



Canada to raise the issues of disadvantages for Canadians and public safety.

Building Partnerships with Forestry:

- The North Algoma Outfitters group, forestry and MNR have been meeting regularly and there has been a tremendous amount of work done to bring these sectors together to discuss challenges and look for opportunities to work together.
- There are some good news stories here and best practices that we could certainly encourage to take place in other parts of the north.
- Both forestry and tourism are equally concerned about the provincial and federal governments push for critical mineral extraction as well as truth and economic reconciliation. There may be opportunities for our sectors to work together to present these concerns to government.

TSSA Liquid Fuels Handling Code Technical Working Group:

- Laurie is sitting on this working group which is currently going through each section of the code to recommend changes/updates. We know that there have been issues for our industry regarding fuel storage and dispensing as outlined in the code. In some instances, implementation of the code is not practical and even possible.
- We continue to gather information brought forward from NOTO members to identify areas of concern and potential recommendations.
- We have been able to make recommendations for changes that reduce burden on businesses and make the code more practical. For example; for seasonal businesses, we have reduced requirements to empty tanks and record monthly.

Many Potential Regulatory Changes in the Works:

In response to the current political and economic status of the world, the Ontario Government is working fast to make regulatory changes that will build resiliency and encourage economic growth in Ontario. While many of these changes are positive, we continue to keep a watchful eye to ensure that the interests of the Resource-Based Tourism Industry are protected.

Modernization of Hunting & Fishing Licensing Products & Processes:

- MNR had posted a proposal back in June to collect feedback to help guide the development of a new fishing and hunting licensing system which is anticipated to launch in late 2026. The proposed changes included:
 - New fish and wildlife mobile application for clients to access their hunting and fishing licence products.
 - Enabling the digital submission of hunter accreditation through the licensing system.
 - Allowing falconers to purchase their apprentice and general falconry licences through the fish and wildlife licensing system.
 - Introducing a new digital game tag as an alternative option to the current paper game tag. Hunters will continue to have the option to choose a paper tag.
 - Creating an 'Outfitter Portal' in the licensing system where moose tourist outfitters and licensed black bear operators can digitally administer their allocation of moose tags and black bear validation certificates and fulfill other obligations electronically.
- We did not receive much feedback from members on this piece, and the feedback we did receive was positive. Continuing to have the option for paper tags and other obligations is key for those in remote areas. This will be phased in over 2026-2027.

Species Conservation Act:

- The Government is continuing to build the [Species Conservation Act, 2025](#) which will eventually replace the existing Endangered Species Act, 2007
- While comparing the existing Endangered Species Act to the new Species Conservation Act, it seems to eliminate a lot of duplication with the existing Federal Government regulations surrounding the protection of threatened and endangered species.



- One point of concern is that there is no mention as to what types of projects would require registration with the Government, which ones would require permits, and what would be exempt.
- Registered projects would still require a business or individual to highlight to the Ministry what activities they will undertake to reduce risk and harm to endangered species in the area.
- We continue to watch for further developments.

Potential Opportunities/Changes for Outfitters & Trappers:

- Minister Harris' (MNR) staff provided us with a heads up on the [Protect Ontario through Free Trade within Canada Act](#). The potential changes discussed were:
 - Allowing residents of other provinces to apply for hunting guide licenses.
 - Allowing residents of other provinces to be instructors in Ontario for the hunter education course.
 - Allowing residents of other provinces to apply for a trapline in Ontario.
- Immediate thought on the guide piece was bear hunting and whether this would allow non-resident Canadian guides to obtain a BMA. This could be an issue.
- On a positive note, this could help operators find qualified hunting guides to fill employment gaps.
- The Minister's office would like to hear our opinion on potential impacts; we are seeking more details before we provide input.

NOTO PROJECTS:

Membership Services:

- Launched the Corporate & Community Champions membership and sent a note including a flyer to all Preferred Supplier & Associate Members to let them know what this change means for them.
- Launched the Corporate & Community Champions Committee.
- We continue to work on creating targeted campaigns to help grow this membership category.
- We are also looking at creating a joint membership initiative with Camping in Ontario.

Membership Benefits:

- NOTO members continue to receive a complimentary CFIB membership and access to all of their services & money-saving benefits as well.
- TIAO also offered NOTO members a discounted rate on their 2025 memberships.
- Most NOTO-specific programs remained the same and the updated discount codes & flyers were shared with members and can be accessed through their membership portal on our website.
- Big changes to the Esso Program: The discount for the Esso program has increased from 2 cents per litre to 3.5 cents per litre and includes 10% off on all oil changes at Mr. Lube. For every operator that signs up to this program, NOTO will receive a \$100 visa gift card.
- Reminded Silver Regular Members and Corporate & Community Champions at various points throughout the year to use their free advertising benefits.

NOTO By-Law Review:

- Updated the NOTO Bylaws to reflect the membership changes that were approved at the 2024 NOTO AGM.
- During the sale of our building, the lawyers pointed out some areas that needed to be changed in order to be up-to-date with the current Non-For-Profit Corporations Act.
- These changes will need to be approved during the AGM (*document attached separately*).

NOTO Office:

- We sold our physical office. NOTO staff are now working from home permanently. This helped reduce our operating costs allowing us to focus more of our limited funds towards advocacy work. We strongly encourage every operator to become a NOTO member.



Experience Fishing:

- While the program seems to be slowing down on the operator registrations side, we continue working with the DMOs to promote the program on the consumer side and getting guests in beds.
- We continue to work with DNO/TEN to refresh the Experience Fishing operator training and to make the modules more interactive.
- Hosted an Adapt Webinar about the program in early March to chat with potential operators.
- Launched an Asian market targeted campaign in partnership with NeONT, Epoch Times and DNO. This included a landing page in Chinese on Epoch Times [Travel Ontario](#) website, an [article](#) featuring their experience at an Experience Fishing location, videos with Chinese subtitles and featured webpage with posts about the program on [Ganjing World](#).
- Ice fishing YouTube tutorials have been filmed by Paul Ethier of FishON!. They are now on our YouTube channel.
- We're looking to continue to build consumer marketing and recruiting winter operators for the program this fiscal.
- Reaching out to sponsors & potential new sponsors to reconfirm commitments.

Resource Stewardship Agreements:

- We continue to seek funding to continue to refresh the resource materials.

New Website Page on Accessibility:

- Understanding that tourism will be under the Ministry for Seniors & Accessibility's scope in the coming year, Kate attended a webinar hosted by TIAO and the Ministry, did all of the AODA training, and conducted a lot of research to build a webpage for operators.
- This webpage will help ensure operators have everything they need to be in compliance with the AODA regulations.
- The webpage can be accessed on the Operator side of our website under the Business Information Tab: <https://noto.ca/operators/business-information/complying-with-ontarios-accessibility-regulations/>

Northern Ontario Tourism Summit:

- NOTO works with DNO to develop the agenda and invite political leaders.
- NOTO assists DNO with coordinating sponsorships and the industry marketplace tradeshow.
- The 2026 Northern Ontario Tourism Summit will be hosted in Sault Ste. Marie, ON.
- NOTO & DNO staff participated in a Fast Track to Success evaluation of the event to see where we can improve for future years. Lots of great ideas were shared and we look forward to exploring new opportunities to add value for dollar for attendees of the conference.

Membership Services:

- Continue to send bi-weekly newsletters to our members and quarterly newsletters to non-members to encourage memberships.
- Job board is still going strong and resumes are sent to operators as we receive them.
- Tourism Rocks Campaign: NOTO participated in a Career Fair at the West Ferris Secondary School in North Bay to promote careers in tourism.
- Looking to build value in membership through the following initiatives:
 - Exploring hosting quarterly chats with members and non-members beginning this Fall to allow operators to provide direct feedback to staff on challenges they are facing to help guide our advocacy work.
 - Members would receive follow-ups and more regular meetings/updates on any initiatives/work done as a result of items they brought forward.
 - Continue to offer complimentary chats with new owners to talk about NOTO, what we do, how we can help and offer support.



Experience Hunting – A Potential Project:

- We are exploring building a program called Experience Hunting. This would mirror Experience Fishing and focus on the educational components for both consumers and operators.
- Working with Miguel at Born to Hunt to build the proposal, explore partnership.
- We are currently looking for funding from various other sources (Government programs, sponsorships)

Canadian Wildlife Conservation Partners (CWCP) Coalition:

- In September, NOTO was invited to participate in the newly created the Canadian Wildlife Conservation Partners (CWCP) coalition. A description of the group from our colleagues at the Safari Club International:
 - The CWCP is a dynamic coalition of conservation-minded organizations from coast to coast to coast, united by our shared commitment to advancing science-based wildlife management, safeguarding biodiversity, and defending the time-honored rights and traditions of hunters, trappers, and outdoor enthusiasts. Our coalition operates under a set of guiding principles and rules of engagement that honor the autonomy of each partner organization, while also coordinating our advocacy efforts on pivotal issues of both national and provincial significance.
 - By providing a unified voice for Canada's hunting and trapping organizations, the CWCP will advocate on a range of shared concerns, including but certainly not limited to, firearms regulations, land access restrictions, wildlife science and management, and international trade in wildlife. We believe that together, we can make a significant impact on these critical issues.
- NOTO staff and the Board of Directors accept the invitation. There is no financial commitment or membership fee associated with our participation.