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Ontario Native Welfare Administrators Association (ONWAA)

AFFORDABILITY TRUST CLOSES AND LEAVES A LEGACY

Neyaashiingmiing, ON, October 7, 2024— The Affordability Fund Trust (AFT), established by the Government of Ontario in March 2017 with a \$100 million endowment, has successfully concluded its mission to empower customers who did not qualify for low-income conservation programs. Initially launched in October 2017, the AFT program ceased intake of new applicants in July 2020 and completed the final delivery of energy efficiency measures in November 2021.

Throughout its operational period, the AFT made a profound impact by supporting 91,093 households across Ontario. This initiative not only reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 5,400 tonnes but also generated \$30 million in annual electricity bill reductions. The program's success surpassed its core performance targets, achieving participation and cost-effectiveness levels comparable to other income-qualified energy conservation programs.

As part of its enduring legacy, the AFT named the Ontario Native Welfare Administrators Association (ONWAA) as the residual beneficiary to take possession of any remaining assets. Founded in 1972 by Kay Taylor of Curve Lake, Ontario, ONWAA has been a trailblazing organization in training and advocacy for First Nation Income Assistance Administrators. Since the 1980s, ONWAA has delivered energy efficiency programs to alleviate stress on Income Assistance offices in First Nation communities. In 2010, they expanded their efforts to include the Low-Energy Assistance Program for Hydro One Remotes, and in 2015, they broadened their initiatives through the Ontario Energy Support Program for all Indigenous persons in Ontario.

The assets being transferred to ONWAA will promote the continuation of this vital work. The ONWAA Board of Directors has decided to establish a newly founded non-profit deemed the First Nation Energy Sustainability Association (FNESA) to ensure the ongoing delivery of energy efficiency programs to low-income individuals, particularly within Indigenous communities in Ontario. FNESA is in the process of applying for charitable status, and ONWAA anticipates receiving the residual funds in the Fall of 2024. The ONWAA Board and its membership across Ontario extend their heartfelt gratitude to the AFT for naming ONWAA the residual beneficiary, enabling them to utilize the assets and continue delivering impactful and essential energy programs.

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