



Safe Environments Directorate  
Healthy Environments and Consumer Safety Branch  
Health Canada  
219 Laurier Avenue West, 10th Floor  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Isabelle Turcotte  
Manager, Regional and Strategic Assessments  
Impact Assessment Agency of Canada  
160 Elgin Street, 22nd Floor  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H3

December 12, 2025

Sent by email to: [regionalrof-cdfregionale@iaac-aeic.gc.ca](mailto:regionalrof-cdfregionale@iaac-aeic.gc.ca)

**Subject: Health Canada and Public Health Agency of Canada's response to the Regional Assessment Working Group's request for information regarding the Regional Assessment in the Ring of Fire Area**

---

Dear Isabelle Turcotte,

Thank you for your letter dated September 25, 2025, requesting Health Canada to provide information, as it relates to the Department's expertise, to support the conduct of the Regional Assessment (RA) in the Ring of Fire (ROF) area. On April 4<sup>th</sup> and May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) provided the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) with information on Health Canada/PHAC's programs, services, or initiatives related to health, social, and economic conditions of Indigenous Peoples in the ROF area.

Health Canada participates in the RA process as a federal authority under the *Impact Assessment Act*. Health Canada makes available specialist or expert information or knowledge in its possession, and coordinates input from PHAC, as required, at the request of IAAC.

Health Canada and PHAC understand that the purpose of this multi-part request is to gather more in-depth information on previously identified programs, services, and initiatives for the ROF area and to draw upon available expertise that aligns with key priorities (e.g., community wellbeing, health inequity, and food security) identified by the Regional Assessment Working Group (RAWG). Health Canada and PHAC have considered the purpose and context of the information request and, where appropriate, have provided to the RAWG additional information about Health Canada/PHAC's programs and initiatives. A summary of this information is attached to this letter



and the detailed response to IAAC can be requested by emailing their inbox ([regionalrof-cdfregionale@iaac-aeic.gc.ca](mailto:regionalrof-cdfregionale@iaac-aeic.gc.ca)).

Health Canada would be available to meet and discuss any of the details in the following response with you, at your request. We would also be available to present the findings of the EnviroScreen methodology to the RAWG, should that be of interest.

Should you have any questions concerning Health Canada/PHAC's response, please contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

*[Detailed Health Canada/PHAC response signed]*

Greg Carreau

Director General, Safe Environments Directorate

Healthy Environments and Consumer Safety Branch, Health Canada

[greg.carreau@hc-sc.gc.ca](mailto:greg.carreau@hc-sc.gc.ca)

- Cc: Sally Gibbs, A/Director General, Environmental Health, Consumer Products and Pesticides Directorate, Regulatory Operations and Enforcement Branch (ROEB), Health Canada
- Cc: Timna Gorber, Director, Health Equity Division, Strategic Policy Directorate, Science and Policy Integration Branch (SPIB), Public Health Agency of Canada
- Cc: Miranda MacPherson, Director, Chemicals and Environmental Health Management Bureau, Healthy Environments and Consumer Safety Branch (HECSB), Health Canada
- Cc: Chantal Roberge, National Director, Environmental Health Program, ROEB, Health Canada
- Cc: Kelsey Lucyk, Manager, Intersectoral Partnerships and Initiatives, Health Equity Division, SPIB, Public Health Agency of Canada
- Cc: Heather Jones-Otazo, Manager, Environmental Assessment and Contaminated Sites Division, HECSB, Health Canada
- Cc: Kitty Ma, Ontario Regional Manager, Environmental Health Program, ROEB, Health Canada

## ATTACHMENT

The following summarizes Health Canada's and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)'s response to the Regional Assessment Working Group (RAWG)'s information request dated September 25, 2025:

- In addition to Health Canada/PHAC's programs and initiatives identified in previous submissions, Health Canada provided further details on a project funded through the Emergency Treatment Fund program. The project, led by an Indigenous community in the Ring of Fire (ROF) area, may offer data and insights related to existing public health crises and associated community challenges in the area. The Department also shared information on a research initiative piloting the EnviroScreen methodology in northern Ontario, which could be used by the RAWG to characterize environmental, health, and socio-economic conditions.
- Health Canada suggested the RAWG refer to the EnviroScreen pilot's technical and engagement reports, which identify some gaps and uncertainties in the existing data for community health and mental wellbeing conditions in northern Ontario. The Department also referred to its *Interim Guidance on Health Impact Assessments* when seeking to characterize varying health effects across subpopulations. In addition, Health Canada shared contacts for external organizations that may possess information relevant to community health and mental wellbeing conditions in the area.
- PHAC presented key findings about inequalities in health status and social determinants of health among First Nations in Canada. The Agency compared, using data disaggregated by age groups, First Nation populations living on reserve, those living off reserve, and non-Indigenous populations across 11 indicators of physical and mental health inequalities at national or provincial/territorial levels. The statistical overview was drawn from two publicly accessible PHAC data resources developed under the Pan-Canadian Health Inequalities Reporting Initiative.
- Health Canada advised that food consumption can be affected by a multitude of interconnected environmental, social, and economic factors linked to resource development. The Department provided external resources that may offer useful data or methods specific to assessing effects on traditional food security in the ROF area.