



June 1, 2022

The Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario

Mike Schreiner, Leader
Green Party of Ontario

Andrea Horwath, Leader of HM Loyal Opposition
Leader, Ontario New Democratic Party

Jim Karahalios, Leader
New Blue Party of Ontario

Steven Del Duca, Leader
Ontario Liberal Party

Derek Sloan, Leader
Ontario Party

Dear provincial party leaders of Ontario,

Sge:no and sago.

As Ontarians gear up to vote on June 2nd to elect the next legislative assembly for the province, Six Nations of the Grand River would like to issue a call to action and a reminder to both candidates and voters of the priority concerns of our community.

The distinct identity and jurisdiction of Six Nations of the Grand River (SNGR) must be respected in every regard by government officials, politicians, and candidates, both provincially and federally. Our sovereign freedom of action and self-governance means that we ourselves attend to our own affairs to the exclusion of governmental authorities that are not directly accountable to our community. Six Nations must be adequately consulted prior to any policy, legislation, or regulation being implemented that could affect our community, our members, or our interests. All too often governments relegate Indigenous consultation to a meager gesture that is only offered after substantive input has already become a moot point.

In the wake of one such instance, when cannabis legalization proceeded without adequate consultation or cooperation, Six Nations stepped up to legislate and regulate cannabis production and retail on our territory so as to protect our community from organized crime, to exercise our own self-determination, and to protect the wellbeing of our people. Our pioneering work to protect our community continues, but we now have an urgent need to have crown prosecutors follow through on their responsibility to uphold and prosecute charges brought against drug dealers and criminal actors by the Six Nations Police Service. We are cognizant of the challenges caused by covid's closure of courts, but charges that may seem low in priority to major cities are of crucial importance to communities our size. This is especially the case when our justice system itself is fragile or frequently called into question. Six Nations is not a lawless community! But when outside officials deem our criminal charges low priority they directly assault the pursuit of justice in our community and threaten the safety of our people. The next Attorney General of Ontario, with the support of the Premier and all MPPs, must urgently address this.

The Province of Ontario has recently launched its iGaming Ontario (iGO) regulatory and licensing initiative under the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO), and once again this was done without

adequate consultation with the Iroquois communities involved in the sector. Gaming is part of our traditional culture and subject to our jurisdictional domain. In 1996, SNGR established the Six Nations Gaming Commission to regulate and licence all gaming on our territory. More recently, SNGR established a Mutual Cooperation Agreement with the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake (MCK) to expand our regulatory and economic capacity in the gaming sector, particularly online. These steps have had and will continue to have tangible results for our community, but the province's move to exclude us from the online sector is an unacceptable infringement of our traditional rights in this field. Ministers and MPPs must recognize our rights in this regard and work to ensure the AGCO and iGO framework accommodates SNGR and MCK gaming endeavours.

Six Nations has also seen officials of the Government of Ontario come onto our territory in ways that violate established agreements and Memorandums of Understanding between our respective authorities. This has occurred most recently with agents of the Ministry of Finance conducting surveillance and enforcement activities in violation of mutual agreements, resulting in the cancellation of those agreements. This not only damages the productivity of our official relationships, but corrodes the basic trust between our peoples.

Our mutual trust is threatened even more when parallel discussions or processes are initiated with leadership figures at Six Nations outside the accountability mechanisms of our elected Council. Our community highly values our own unity and seeks to engage with private or public partners in unity. When governments or private developers intrude in our internal affairs, or involve themselves in the relationship between our elected Council and our traditional leadership, it is equivalent to adopting a divide and conquer approach. No conversations or consultations touching on Six Nations, our lands, or our interests in regional development must happen outside the purview of our own elected officials who are directly accountable to our community.

With regards to development projects on our traditional lands, in particular on the Haldimand Tract, we are looking for provincial rules with which municipalities must comply that will ensure the required archeological consultations occur early enough in the projects' lifetimes so that appropriate archeological preservation and research can happen and important historical records or artefacts not be destroyed through neglect.

We have a major land claims case before the courts, the likely results of which will need to be prepared for in negotiations with federal and provincial authorities. Specifically, SNGR is pursuing the Crown in court for breach of fiduciary duty, violation of treaty obligations, and misappropriation of lands and trust funds. Officials in the Government of Canada's Department of Justice have acknowledged that the case is "high risk" to the Crown and "will result in a significant damage award" that SNGR estimates could be in the hundreds of billions of dollars. Ignoring any inevitable outcome will only prolong associated challenges for all parties, and the Government of Ontario should begin serious discussions about this task and appropriate public awareness efforts.

SNGR is asking that provincial authorities also take steps to shore up Six Nations enforcement measures against illegal dumping on our lands. Vehicles from off our territories frequently trespass on our lands and illegally dump waste and contaminants that threaten our environment and harm of community. This is unacceptable and reprehensible behaviour from a few bad actors in neighbouring communities. We recognize that the vast majority of Ontarians recognize this as reprehensible and unacceptable, and we seek increased provincial efforts and resources to combat this growing problem. Protecting Mother Earth and responsibly stewarding the environment and our natural resources appertains to everyone.

As can be seen, there are many issues on which the Legislature and Government of Ontario need to take

action to protect our rights and help us serve our community's interests, and this letter is far from exhaustive. We will need work done to help Six Nations build our own internal justice system capacity, including potential renegotiation of the tripartite agreement on Six Nations policing and collaboration to build judiciary capacity on SNGR. We will need increased support for Six Nations infrastructure funding. We will need support for expedited action in response to the needs of SNGR department heads and service provision. In so many way, SNGR and Ontario can work together to the mutual benefit of our communities.

We are closely following this provincial election and express our admiration and esteem for all those who have put their names forward as candidates for public office. We look forward to working with all newly elected or re-elected MPPs, Ministers and the Premier.

Nyaweh,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark B. Hill', written over the printed name.

Chief Mark B. Hill
Six Nations of the Grand River