



Kahnawà:ke Ratitsénhaiens

Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke

P.O. Box 720 Kahnawà:ke Mohawk Territory JOL 1B0

Phone: (450) 632-7500 Fax: (450) 638-5958

Web Site: www.Kahnawake.com E-mail: communications@mck.ca

Enhsakotò:kénhte Nitiotié:ren Tsi Ietsenhaientákhwa

Tsi Nahóten Karihwanákere No'nenk News Release

MCK responds to new Conservative crackdown on tobacco

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – 6, Enniskó:wa/March 2013) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) wishes to inform the community that it is very concerned about new federal government legislation designed to crack down on the so-called illegal tobacco trade.

“We will be taking a close look at this legislation,” said Intergovernmental Relations Portfolio Chief Lloyd Phillips. “The Native tobacco industry is a very complicated issue, one which sees an ancestral right to commerce going head-to-head with both federal and provincial governments. In Kahnawà:ke we have consistently said that the MCK supports the industry in principle but we understand the need to regulate it properly in order to keep out unwanted elements, such as organized crime.”

“We are concerned that heavy-handed measures may create a whole new set of difficulties that better dialogue could have helped to avoid,” he added.

The MCK has long held the position that the industry should be regulated internally. The MCK currently has a working group consisting of Chiefs Gina Deer, Christine Zachary-Deom, Billy Diabo and Bobby Patton, who will continue discussions with those involved in the industry to develop a regulatory regime.

“This recent development emphasizes the need for our people to increase their efforts to find a workable solution that will benefit the collective and create a tool that will allow us to better defend our right to commerce,” Chief Phillips concluded.

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For information, please contact:

Joe Delaronde, Political Press Attaché

Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke

450-632-7500, joe.delaronde@mck.ca