



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

Kahnawà:ke, Quebec reach Interim Agreement on Mercier Bridge works

(Kahnawake – 2, Ohiarí:ha/June 2011) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke would like to inform the community that the *Interim Agreement on Certain Conditions Applicable to Kahnawake Workers on Honoré-Mercier Bridge Contract B* has been reached with Québec that will allow for urgently needed repairs to the Mercier Bridge to begin on the “Contract B” section.

This interim agreement achieves the goal of meeting the requirements of the 1932 Order-in-Council that requires Kahnawà:ke workers have priority for works on the Mercier Bridge by removing the roadblocks that exist in current Québec laws. It gives Quebec the means to amend its laws to formally recognize Kahnawà:ke's jurisdiction in several matters of labor on the Mercier Bridge.

This follows the Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail du Québec (CSST)/Mohawk Self Insurance agreement signed on 11 Onerahtohkó:wa/May which includes a commitment from Québec that sets the stage for a long-term process to address the contentious R-20 requirements, as well as the removal of the Commission de la construction du Québec (CCQ). These will be replaced by Kahnawà:ke-created mechanisms.

No taxes will be deducted from any Kahnawà:ke workers employed on this project. As “Contract B” has been declared a ‘union job’ by the contractor, union dues will be applicable. Employment insurance and the Québec parental insurance program will also be deducted, as they are for Contract A; however, workers may choose to be exempt of social benefits (including pension) and CCQ administration, and to receive, directly in his/her paycheck, paid vacation and statutory holiday allowances.

Regarding the issue of the eleven union ironworkers who had to leave the ‘Contract A’ portion of the work, Québec has committed to having these workers fully reinstated by the union, without penalty.

The Interim Agreement was signed by Labor Portfolio Chief Rhonda Kirby and Intergovernmental Relations Portfolio Chief Mike Bush on behalf of Kahnawà:ke. Chief Martin Leborgne objected, and did not sign the Mohawk Council Executive Directive that allowed for this action to proceed.

“A tremendous amount of hard work went into this,” said Grand Chief Michael Ahríhron Delisle, Jr. “Hats off to the entire negotiation team.”

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For information about this release, please contact:
Joe Delaronde, Political Press Attaché
Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke
450-632-7500 ext. 2251 or joe.delaronde@mck.ca

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