



*Tsi Nahò:ten Karihwanákere Nó:nen'k*

# PRESS RELEASE

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## MCK Opposes Agreement being voted on by Algonquins of Ontario

For Immediate Release

**(Kahnawake – 2, Enniskó:wa/ March 2016)** The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke wishes to inform the community that letters have been sent to the Federal Minister of Indigenous Affairs Carolyn Bennet and to the Algonquins of Ontario strongly opposing a Land Agreement currently in the process of ratification by the Algonquins of Ontario with a final vote expected by Monday, March 7, 2016.

"There is no way this deal should go through," said Grand Chief Joseph Tokwiro Norton. "The government cannot make a deal on lands of which portions belong to the Iroquois, and cannot make deals with an entity where the majority of parties involved in the negotiations are not the proper rights holders."

Chief and Council unanimously agree on the following:

*This type of modern treaty effectively extinguishes aboriginal title and rights forever, thereby depriving future generations of their inherent rights. Therefore, it is essential that this type of an agreement be a fair and just settlement which respects First Nations' histories and rights. The Agreement in Principle is strikingly asymmetrical with the Crown greatly benefiting from the extinguishment as well as the full and final settlement of past wrongs and is offering very little in return. This asymmetry is a concern for all First Nations as it sets a terrible precedent for future land claim settlements.*

Serious concerns about the Agreement include the issue of overlapping interests by the Algonquins of Ontario and the Mohawk Nation on the lands in question that have not been adequately addressed and resolved. Of further concern is the inclusion of illegitimate negotiation parties in the negotiations leading to the Agreement-in-Principle that is currently being voted on.

"We have been highly concerned over this deal while it has been in the works," the Grand Chief continued. "We have met with their representatives, but to no avail. And, interestingly, even the Algonquin communities in Quebec have huge concerns over this deal. We are in firm and fundamental opposition to any deal that will extinguish - or will attempt to extinguish - rights in lands that overlap with Iroquois land. Further, we are strictly opposed to any agreement that is being negotiated by parties that are not the proper and true rights holders. In this case, aside from the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan, the remaining parties of the Algonquins of Ontario are illegitimately attempting to negotiate rights and title that do not rightfully belong to them."

The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke will be taking part in a Press Conference in Ottawa on Thursday, March 3rd, being organized by the Iroquois Caucus to provide further details into the problematic elements of the proposed agreement.

For more background on this issue see these previously published articles:  
<http://aptn.ca/news/2015/12/02/algonquins-of-ontario-push-ahead-with-vote-on-controversial-modern-day-treaty/>  
<http://www.thedailyobserver.ca/2016/02/26/algonquins-to-vote-on-agreement>