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PRESS RELEASE

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MCK comments on Quebec ‘exploring the possibility of legalizing casinos in Aboriginal territories’

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – 7, Onerahtohκό:wa/May 2021) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) wishes to comment on a news report that indicates the Quebec government is studying the possibility of legalizing casinos in Indigenous territories. Additionally, the report states that ‘discussions are underway with Kahnawà:ke’s elected officials to legalize the casino already present since 2010.’

“There are a couple of major issues with these statements,” said letsénhahienhs (Elected Chief) Gina Deer. “First, while we’ve had a couple of meetings with Mr. Lafrenière, our current discussions have been limited to the relationship between our two governments and a few specific issues. We can say unequivocally that we are absolutely NOT, nor have been, in any discussions on the matter of seeking Quebec’s validity or legalization of any aspect of our gaming industry in our community whatsoever. Our gaming industry in Kahnawà:ke has always been, and continues to be, an assertion of our inherent right to self-determination. It is by no means an industry in which we would seek validation or legalization from Quebec.”

“TVA Nouvelles needs to be corrected on their misinformation concerning the matter of gaming establishments in the Territory,” she added. “While there are two licensed poker houses and two facilities with Electronic Gaming Devices in Kahnawà:ke, there is no casino operating in the Territory. History will recall that three proposals for a casino in Kahnawà:ke were rejected by referendum. The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke is bound by those decisions.”

She concluded by stating, “It appears that TVA Nouvelles seems to have gotten an impression, whether from Quebec or elsewhere, that the information they have reported is fact. Simply put, it is not. After a discussion with Mr. Lafrenière on this issue, he provided assurance that a clarification on Quebec’s behalf would be publicly issued. We call upon TVA Nouvelles to issue a similar statement to immediately address this misinformation.”

The MCK wishes to reiterate that it is interested to meet with Quebec and, indeed, continues to work towards improving its relationship with the province. However, it feels that it is incumbent on Quebec to meet on a government to government level in order to move forward.

“We have been unable to meet with Premier Legault since he was elected,” letsénhahienhs Deer concluded. “We have always been open to honest and respectful dialogue. We are certain that by meeting, we will be able find common agreement on our co-existence in order to best serve our respective peoples.”

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