



Tsi Nahò:ten Karihwanákere Nó:nen'k

PRESS RELEASE

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MCK commends Montreal Canadiens, responds to Quebec

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – 21, Kenténha/October 2021) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) wishes to advise the public of its displeasure with recent commentary made by Quebec Government officials in regards to the Indigenous land acknowledgement recently instated by the Montreal Canadiens Groupe.

The acknowledgement, which the Montreal Canadiens plan to announce before every home game, reads: “The Montreal Canadiens wish to acknowledge the Kanien’kehá:ka, also known as the Mohawk Nation, for their hospitality on this traditional and unceded territory where we are gathered today. Tiohtià:ke/Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Peoples. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within this community where we have now had the privilege to play for over one hundred years.”

The MCK commends the Montreal Canadiens Groupe on their acknowledgement efforts, which serve as an example of true reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous Peoples. The media commentary from Quebec insist that it may be a mistake to refer to specific nations when acknowledging the people to which the unceded territory belongs. Although Quebec’s comments do not come as a surprise, the MCK is repulsed by Quebec’s attempt to politicize a genuine reconciliatory action on the part of a sports club, which undermines Kanien’kehá:ka (specifically) presence in the traditional territory of the Tiohtià:ke (Montreal) region.

“When we talk about land, it is an essential part of who we are as Kanien’kehá:ka,” said Ohén:ton Í:iente ne Ratitsénhaienhs Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer. “It holds the knowledge of our ancestors, our history, and our presence now and for the future. Opinionated commentary that challenge and discredit our presence are not only insulting, they are taken as displaced attacks on our existence.”

The school yard tactics of utilizing media to advance political agendas must come to an end. The MCK believes in working collaboratively with external governments to ensure the interests of each respective party are represented responsibly. Yet, true reconciliation can only occur when both parties are willing to create an open dialogue towards building authentic relationships. Respectively, the MCK continues to extend an open offer to Quebec officials, and any other non-Indigenous group to work with Kahnawà:ke in educating themselves on the history of Indigenous Peoples, from an Indigenous perspective.

Working collaboratively is the only way to establish goodwill, peace and harmony between our nations.

Tho Niiowennake.