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MOHAWK COUNCIL OF AKWESASNE

9, Ohiarha/June, 2009

Hon. Peter Van Loan
Minister of Public Security
Room 157, East Block
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

FAXED: 613-992-7752

Watkwanonhweraton/Greetings:

RE: Arming Of Customs Officers
Stationed At the Facility on Kawehnoke (Cornwall Island)

The Mohawk Council of Akwasasne (MCA) has made repeated attempts to initiate meaningful discussions with Canada's representatives as well as the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) on the above matter. Our letters of March 20, 2009 and March of 2008 to the Prime Minister and then Minister Stockwell Day went unanswered. While the President of the CBSA did meet with MCA on several occasions, these discussions were used to inform the MCA that the arming would proceed as planned over the objections of the Mohawks of Akwasasne.

CBSA's decision to close the bridge crossing has disrupted the lives of Akwasasne residents and surrounding communities, with the full impact yet to be determined. The united community of Akwasasne shares the same desire of surrounding residents to have the bridge crossing re-opened to all traffic as soon as possible but in a manner that addresses our community's needs and respects a special negotiated agreement.

It has not been the Akwasasne community's desire to disrupt the flow of traffic or to block the bridge crossing. We would never take any actions that would impact the ability of our own people to travel within the community or impact the travelling safety of our neighbors. Akwasasne Mohawks comprise nearly 70% of travelers that utilize this Port of Entry to visit family and friends, to attend school or the hospital, do business or shop in nearby communities or for a multitude of reasons to travel. The residents of Akwasasne have and will continue to use peaceful measure to make their issues known.

Mohawk Gov't Office 613 575-2348
613 575-2220



Admin. Office 613 575-2266
613 575-2222

The community of Akwesasne has continually stated that our issues are much broader than CBSA's arming initiative. It involves the Human Rights grievances lodged against the abusive actions of some of its CBSA officers, not the bridge or the entities that maintain the bridge crossing. Our community is encouraging other external agencies to meet with Akwesasne leadership and discuss appropriate measure to resume the flow of traffic through both spans of the Three Nations Bridge Crossing.

We are continuing to seek an exemption of the arming initiative so that proper consultations reflective of Canada's duty to consult take place with the Mohawk community of Akwesasne. We are also seeking a resolution to the numerous complaints filed against the two CBSA officers for abusing their powers and violating the rights of our community members.

I look forward to hearing from you and remind you that the safety of the travelling public and of our community members must be at the forefront of any discussions.

Skennen/Peace

MOHAWK COUNCIL OF AKWESASNE



Timothy Thompson
Grand Chief

CC:

Hon. Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs
Hon. Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
Hon. Robert Douglas Nicholson, Minister of Justice
Hon. John Baird, Minister of Transportation
Michael Ignatieff, Leader of the Opposition
Mark Holland, M.P.
Todd Russell, M.P.
Joe Volpe, M.P.
Stephen Rigby, President CBSA