



COMMUNITY NOTICE

For Immediate Release:

Ohiarihkó:wa/July 29, 2020

MCA SENDS NOTICE TO RCMP AND SURETE DU QUEBEC

In response to community complaints over several concerning instances of outside agencies policing in Akwesasne, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne submitted notice in writing to both the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Surete du Quebec to remind them of the proper protocols. The capabilities of the community's own police department – the Akwesasne Mohawk Police Service – was highlighted as well as the long history of police issues our community members have experienced.

In the letter to the RCMP dated June 29, 2020, Grand Chief Abram Benedict wrote, *“As the federally recognized local government, the MCA takes the position that AMPS is the police force responsible to patrol our waters and we are committed to strengthening border security and addressing threats. We take the concerns raised by our community about outside law enforcement agencies patrolling our waters seriously. It would be most beneficial for Canada to assist Akwesasne, rather than dictate to us or to our community members. We cannot assume that our community members would passively accept the imposition of an outside enforcement agency attempting to enforce laws on our territory without jurisdiction.”*

The letter continued, *“The larger issue at hand is why the RCMP appears to be overly enthusiastic about maintaining a presence in Akwesasne’s territorial waters when they are not needed and their presence has not been requested. The Akwesasne Mohawk Police Service (AMPS) continues to be the community police service responsible for the safety and security of the community of Akwesasne under the jurisdiction of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne. Akwesasne is our territory and we have jurisdiction here.”*

Similar messaging was included in a July 20, 2020 letter to the Surete du Quebec (SQ), in which Grand Chief Benedict wrote, *“It would be most beneficial for the SQ to maintain their role of being willing and able to provide assistance to AMPS, only upon request, and to cease entering our territory under any other circumstance.”*

In response, both the RCMP and SQ agreed to support the Akwesasne Mohawk Police.

The SQ's response, dated July 23, 2020, stated that the SQ will cease unwelcome policing in Akwesasne territory and only intervene if they are invited to do so.



In a response dated July 15, 2020 RCMP confirmed their intentions to work mutually and respectfully, and outlined recent efforts to build positive relations. One measure is a training program the RCMP is offering to AMPS officers on marine vessel patrol which will enhance the capacity of AMPS to patrol the rivers.

“Once the AMPS members have received their vessel operator training, they (AMPS) will be independently conducting the majority of the patrols in that area with the assistance of the Cornwall RCMP marine members when required,” the RCMP wrote. The RCMP is also in the process of updating previous Memorandums of Understanding to reflect joint patrols with AMPS on board

The RCMP continued, *“We completely agree that AMPS is and will continue to be the community police service responsible for the safety and security of the community of Akwesasne.”*

Should community members have additional concerns or questions, please contact the Mohawk Government Office at 613-575-2348.