



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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U.S. DISTRICT COURT RULES FAVOURABLY ON AKWESASNE BOUNDARY

The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne is pleased to share that a positive ruling has been received related to the New York State land claim. On March 14, 2022, U.S. District Court Judge Lawrence Kahn ruled in a summary judgement that the boundary of Akwesasne set in the 1796 Treaty – ratified by the U.S. Congress that same year – are still the valid boundaries of Akwesasne, and the State’s illegal taking of Akwesasne land in the 19th century did not affect its treaty-guaranteed boundaries.

The immediate next steps with regard to the New York State land claim are not immediately defined; however, the court ruling supports Akwesasne’s decades long claim that land was taken illegally from our community members.

The main New York State land claim was filed in two cases in 1982 by the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (named St. Regis Mohawk Band of Indians, at the time). In 1989 the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe and Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs filed a claim as well. In 1992 a federal judge combined the three cases and the three councils have worked together in the pursuit of land claim resolutions since.

“For decades, leadership and staff have worked together to pursue this land claim and voice our common position that Akwesasne lands were taken illegally,” said MCA Grand Chief Abram Benedict. “This ruling is a very promising step as it sends a message to New York State and county courts that our land claim has validity. We acknowledge that this is the result of years of hard work by our staff including the late Salli Benedict.”

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