



PRESS RELEASE

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MCA STANDS IN STRONG OPPOSITION TO ONTARIO'S BILL 5

The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (MCA) stands in strong and unequivocal opposition to Ontario's *Bill 5: Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act*. This legislation is a direct attack on Indigenous rights, treaty responsibilities, and environmental protection.

Bill 5 proposes changes that would allow developers to bypass archaeological assessments, which then puts sacred burial sites, ceremonial grounds, and ancestral lands at risk of destruction. It removes key environmental protections, limits legal recourse, and eliminates Ontario's constitutional duty to consult with Indigenous Nations.

This Bill threatens to silence our voices and erase the history and rights of First Nations people across the province, undermines Canada's commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada.

Through the work of our Akwesasne Rights & Research Office (ARRO), the MCA has taken every available step to oppose this legislation. Letters have been submitted, concerns have been raised, and the fight continues.

ARRO Portfolio Chief Vanessa Adams noted, "Bill 5 undermines our Inherent Rights as recognized in UNDRIP, Article 32 affirms our right to determine the use of our lands and resources and to be consulted in good faith. Ontario's attempt to bypass is a breach of International and Constitutional Law. Our heritage is not dispensable."

Grand Chief Leonard Lazore added, "This Bill dishonours our treaties, disrespects our ancestors, and disregards the role we have in protecting our lands. We will not accept being cut out of decisions that affect our people, our culture, and our future."

We are calling on the Province of Ontario to immediately withdraw the proposed exemptions, remove immunity provisions and restore full archaeological and environmental protections. We urge the Ontario Government to uphold the Crowns' legal and moral duties under the TRC and UNDRIP, and engage in meaningful, nation-to-nation dialogue with Indigenous Nations.

To the community of Akwesasne: we are acting. We are defending our responsibilities to our people, to our land, and for our future. We encourage all community members to stay informed, speak out, and support the collective effort to protect what cannot be replaced.

For more information, please contact ARRO at 613-575-2250.