



Six Nations "Iroquois" Confederacy

GRAND RIVER COUNTRY



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Cayuga Bridge work stops Ontario fails to consult

CAYUGA-The Ministry of Transportation has been put on notice and construction work on the Cayuga Bridge spanning the Grand River came to a halt Tuesday (November 3 2014) morning after workers were told Ontario had failed to engage with the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council (HCCC) on a bridge that encroaches on Haudenosaunee tow path lands and the bed of the Grand River.

The Haudenosaunee Development Institute (HDI) the HCCC's development department, has been attempting to engage with the Ministry of Transportation for the past three (3) years with respect to MTO Projects which are impairing rights in areas of HCCC jurisdiction.

Despite repeated requests for a good faith engagement process the MTO has refused to sit down in good faith and consider the impact of MTO Projects on Haudenosaunee rights and interests, says HDI legal adviser Aaron Detlor.

Instead, he said, the Ontario Liberals would rather "cost the province's manufacturing and construction industry tens of millions of dollars in work stoppages, shut downs and court costs as their failure to engage pushes the projects and Haudenosaunee into direct conflict".

In an October 22, 2014 meeting with the HDI, the MTO acknowledged the impact of the Cayuga bridge construction upon Haudenosaunee rights and also MTO specifically acknowledged that it had not undertaken any assessment of Haudenosaunee rights including the rights of ownership given that the construction is taking place on tow path lands owned by the Haudenosaunee. The MTO has been aware of Haudenosaunee rights and interests in the tow path lands along the Grand River and the bed of the Grand even as recently as 1985 when Ontario negotiated an agreement with Six Nations to build the Caledonia bypass bridge, it negotiated with the community and agreed to build a bridge in Ohsweken in exchange for use of the tow path lands and bed of the Grand River at Caledonia.

"Despite knowledge of the Haudenosaunee rights on this area of land and despite the acknowledge failure to undertake any assessment of Haudenosaunee rights whatsoever the MTO refused to halt construction on the project," said Detlor

He said "the refusal of the MTO to deal in good faith has meant that the Haudenosaunee must now exercise their rights in and around the Cayuga Bridge project until the MTO is prepared to halt construction and sit down in good faith to begin discussions to determine if the Haudenosaunee are prepared to grant consent to allow MTO to proceed."

Notice was served at the construction site this morning.

Detlor said "The HDI deeply regrets the failure of the MTO to come to the table in good faith and any inconveniences that MTO's conduct will cause to the people of Haldimand County. We hope that the HDI and MTO will be able to sit down in a mediated process in the near future to resolve the failure of MTO to uphold the honour of the crown."

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A Communications protocol framework between the Haudenosaunee and Ontario Minister of Aboriginal Affairs has been in limbo since June. It was the first in a series of established processes for the Ontario government, as part of the Crown, in how Ontario and the Haudenosaunee will relate to each other, with its basis in the Two Row Wampum.

Ontario instead of returning to the communications table have unilaterally established a new table that appears to include the Six Nations Band Council and Haldimand County Council and attempts to bring the Haudenosaunee Confederacy under the Indian Act system.

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