



CHIPPEWAS OF THE THAMES FIRST NATION

January 25, 2016

The Corporation of the City of London
300 Dufferin Avenue
London, ON N6A 4L9

Attn: Community & Protective Services Committee

Subject: Springbank Dam Rehabilitation Project and Reconciliation

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to request a few moments to introduce the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation (COTTFN) at the Community & Protective Services Committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday, February 2nd, 2016.

As you may not be aware, COTTFN is an Ojibway community located 25 minutes southwest of London. Membership is approximately 2700 people which includes on and off reserve. We are known as Anishnaabeg and are included in the Algonquin linguistic group.

COTTFN has the responsibility of protecting the natural environment which is steeped in tradition and ceremonial practices since time immemorial. This responsibility extends beyond the use of fish and wildlife for sustenance in the Thames River to what is referred to as the communities' 'environmental footprint' that includes the water that flows to Lake St. Clair and into Lake Erie. We are taught from birth to respect and care for the natural environment, as we would care for our families.

Aboriginal and Treaty Rights are constitutionally protected as indicated in Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. Several Supreme Court cases, *Sparrow*, *Delgamuukw* and more recently, *Tsilhqot'in Nation* further emphasize and affirm these rights. Further to this, the Springbank Dam is located within the London Township Treaty, dated 1796 to which COTTFN is a signatory.

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In 1851, the Industrial Institute later known as the Mount Elgin Residential School was built. As we understand today, the residential school policy has had a tremendously negative effect on our communities; COTTFN is no exception as the school itself was located right in the community.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission have recently published Calls to Action in an attempt to assist in the process of reconciliation in Canada. Call to Action #92, urges corporations to adopt as its reconciliation framework or guideline the application of the *United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) and speaks to the commitment and value of meaningful consultation and building respectful relationships.

It is in this spirit of reconciliation that COTTFN hopes to establish the building blocks of a successful working relationship with the City of London. This relationship would be to the benefit of all residents of both communities as there is considerable strength in numbers. It is important to note that the descendants of the modern day communities of Bjekwanong (Walpole Island), Chippewas of Kettle & Stoney Point, Aamjiwnaang and Caldwell First Nation are also included in the London Township Treaty of 1796 and are treaty partners. In effect, the City of London is a treaty partner.

Several federally protected species of fish and mussels identified as Threatened, Endangered or in one instance, Extirpated by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) have been identified in the Thames River north and in the community of COTTFN. COTTFN is also actively engaged with species identification and protection through Environment Canada's Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk and has been developing work instructions to protect these species that coincide with Fisheries and Oceans Canada's associated recovery strategies.

With respect to water quality and quantity, COTTFN's water supply system is defined as Groundwater under the Direct Influence (GUDI) of surface water. COTTFN's GUDI consists of a horizontal infiltration gallery located within 50-100 m of the Thames River. In other words, what happens in the Thames River directly impacts COTTFN.

In conclusion, as we build that trust and respect for one another, it is our hope to continue to communicate with the City of London and work together to make mutually beneficial decisions for our communities.

Respectfully,

Mary Alikakos
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