



Tsi Nahò:ten Karihwanákere Nó:nen'k

PRESS RELEASE

Media Inquiries:

Joe Delaronde

Political Press Attaché
450- 632-7500 ext 63251

MCKMedia@mck.ca

Technical

Contact:

Tonya Perron

Ietsénhaienhs

Tonya.perron@mck.ca

Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke

Kahnawà:ke Mohawk
Territory
P.O. Box 720
J0L 1B0

Tel: (450) 632-7500

Fax: (450) 638-5958

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Official Declaration of State of Emergency

For Immediate Release

(Kahnawake – 21, Onerahtókha/April 2020) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) wishes to inform the community that Chief & Council have ratified a formal decree on the Declaration of State of Emergency in regard to the current COVID-19 pandemic. The decree, via Mohawk Council Resolution (“the Resolution”), was passed by consensus at a duly-convened Council meeting held earlier today.

The passage of the Resolution was necessitated by the unprecedented nature of the global pandemic which has had a profound impact on our community. While the MCK activated the Kahnawà:ke COVID-19 Task Force (“the Task Force”) on March 16, 2020 and renewed their mandate on April 14, 2020. This next step will solidify the legal basis for decisions being made to combat COVID-19.

It is important to note that this step was taken to ensure Kahnawà:ke’s jurisdiction is protected. Though offers of assistance of any kind during this time are very much appreciated, it must be made clear that any help provided to this community by outside entities cannot be imposed; rather, any measures taken will be at the behest of Kahnawà:ke’s authorities. Further to this, declaring the state of emergency as this next step in our law will make it easier to access necessary outside funding.

“As we have stated on several occasions, the Kahnawà:ke Emergency Preparedness Law (“the Law”) provides for emergency measures to be taken in the event of imminent threat to the health and safety of the community,” said Ietsénhaienhs Tonya Perron, speaking on behalf of the MCK. “In order to facilitate certain operations connected to the current pandemic, it has become clear that the Declaration of a State of Emergency has been deemed an absolute necessity.”

Please note that, for the purposes of the Kahnawà:ke Emergency Preparedness Law, the Grand Chief, the Executive Operations Officer (acting for the Executive Director under the Law) and the Director of Justice (now Commissioner of Justice) unanimously declared the state of emergency upon the advice of the Commissioner of Public Safety (formerly Director of Community Protection). The Commissioner of Public Safety will continue to lead the COVID-19 Task Force and shall implement all necessary emergency measures under the Law to mitigate the impacts of the virus on the community and for the protection of the health and safety of the community of Kahnawà:ke.

“After a great deal of consideration, it was clear that today’s decision was necessary,” concluded Ietsénhaienhs Perron. “While, as a community, we have faced many challenges throughout our history, no one has ever seen anything like this in our lifetime. This will help us in our fight against an invisible foe.”

-30-