



Tsi Nahò:ten Karihwanákere Nó:nen'k

PRESS RELEASE

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Mohawk Council of Kahnawake laments willfully uninformed critics of Champlain Hudson clean energy project

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – 21, Onerahtókha/April 2022) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) wishes to voice its concern over ill-advised statements made in a Huffington Post article regarding the recently-approved Champlain Hudson Power Express (CHPE), Inc., a project created to provide renewable clean energy to the New York City area.

The MCK's concerns stem from statements attributed to John Lipscomb, vice-president of the Hudson Riverkeepers, who refers to hydropower as "blood energy," and that the project includes lands that would be "stolen from First Nations tribes." In another article in the City Limits newsletter, a representative from the Hudson Riverkeepers uses the phrase "a bribe, basically," to describe Kahnawà:ke's participation in the project. Nothing could be further from the truth.

"This is an insulting depiction of Kahnawà:ke's involvement given that the MCK and Hydro-Québec negotiated a commercial agreement in good faith for joint ownership in the Hertel Line," said Ohén:ton Í:iente ne Ratitsénhaienhs (Grand Chief) Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer, in reference to the section which delivers the power from the Montreal area to the connection point at the Canada-U.S. border. "The MCK would not have participated in this project, unless it fully aligned with Kahnawà:ke's environmental values."

First, we need to make clear that the MCK has clearly and consistently supported the ongoing protection of Mother Earth. It is not a choice – it is a responsibility that is ingrained in our DNA. As one of those First Nation 'tribes,' we have allied with many conservation/environmental groups on many issues for many years, and we will continue to do so.

In this case, we feel that Mr. Lipscomb has not taken the time to make himself aware of the details of Kahnawà:ke's involvement in this project. The MCK has been a strong supporter of the CHPE and its construction, as it will significantly reduce the use of fossil fuel power plants in that region, which is one of the most populous in the United States, as well as one of the world's most important cities. Historically, Kahnawà:ke ironworkers are known worldwide for the role they played in building its impressive skyline. For that, and other reasons, this community has a strong relationship with New York City – one that continues to this day.

Additional statements demand correction/clarification, as Hydro-Québec not only did their due diligence in consulting with Indigenous groups, but they also developed a business partnership with our community. Further to that, Hydro-Québec (a Crown-corporation) acknowledged Kahnawà:ke as the rightful caretakers of the lands to be developed – which has been met with great appreciation by our people.

As the details of our support and involvement are too complex for the medium of a press release, we will invite Mr. Lipscomb and others to view the MCK's submission of a brief to the State of New York's Public Service Commission ([click here](#)). We believe that he will gain a far more comprehensive understanding of our support and involvement in this significant 'green' project.

We recognize that hydroelectric facilities have had an impact on other Indigenous groups in the past, but no new power generation infrastructure is required in the context of this project. Also, it is important to note that the Hertel Line – the name attributed to the CHPE transmission infrastructure on the Canadian side of the border – is the only new infrastructure build out required to transmit the renewable hydro-electric power to the State of New York. No other infrastructure is required, and the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke are the only established Indigenous community that will be directly impacted by the build out of the Hertel Line in Canada.

"As Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) people, we are very much aware of our shared history," said Grand Chief Sky-Deer. "It has been a difficult, challenging and – yes – sometimes tragic history, but we have the rare opportunity to work together to improve a relationship that has been strained for far too long. It is our collective duty to do the right thing for Mother Earth."