



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:

Ietsenhaiensh Tonya
Perron
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

*As per the MCK
Communications Protocol,
all media requests must be
arranged through the Public
Relations / Communications
Unit*

MCK says Quebec's Bill 61 a real cause for concern

For Immediate Release

(Kahnawake – 29, Ohiarikhó:wa/July 2020) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) wishes to advise the community that it is very concerned over Bill 61, the proposed Quebec legislation that would fast-track infrastructure development/projects to stimulate the economy by allowing for the completion of project reviews and approvals in a shorter timeframe than normally required.

While the MCK understands the provincial government's rationale to stimulate the economy because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is great concern over certain aspects of Bill 61 that are systemically racist, ultimately aiming to increase government and third-party authority over Indigenous lands and resources. Additionally, the acceleration/streamlining of environmental authorizations is, simply put, bad for the environment and incompatible with our rights and worldview.

"We will be directly impacted by Bill 61, and we aren't pleased," said Ratsénhaiensh Ross Montour, the lead Chief on the Consultation Portfolio. "The measures envisioned in Bill 61 are incompatible with the government's Duty to Consult us when projects arise that could impact our rights. The fact that Quebec included the Mercier Bridge reconstruction project within the scope of this legislation without our consent is not just problematic – it is utterly and completely unacceptable. Needless to say, we advised Quebec that we have taken a formal position that we are vehemently opposed to this inclusion along with several other aspects of the bill itself."

"Bill 61, if passed 'as is,' will erase 60 years of progress made in our rights," he added. "Kahnawà:ke is not prepared to move backward to the kinds of expropriation our ancestors fought against."

The MCK has been meeting with the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL), who have formally opposed Bill 61 because of the potential impacts to Indigenous lands and rights and the complete absence of consultation with Indigenous communities in the process of drafting this legislation. Environmental and citizens groups have also expressed opposition to the Bill because it would lower environmental standards and processes.

"We will continue to engage with the AFNQL and other communities to continue to fight to ensure Indigenous rights are not impacted by this Bill," Ratsénhaiensh Montour concluded. "The worry is that the Quebec government intends to pass this legislation quickly, with little opportunity for us to review its content, once it is presented again. Additionally, we continue to await a response from Premier Legault on whether his government intends to still include the Mercier Bridge reconstruction project in the Bill."

The MCK will continue to update the community on this issue on a timely basis.

-30-