

## Kahnawake Responds to Funding Cuts from Indigenous Services Canada: Statement from the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake

As a proud Kanien'kehá:ka and advocate for Indigenous justice, I am deeply alarmed by the Carney government's decision to implement 15% budget cuts across all federal departments, including Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). This action is not just a failure of public policy—it is a violation of human rights and constitutional law.

While provincial transfer payments have been safeguarded to protect essential services for everyday Canadians, **these same services for First Nations—funded federally through ISC—are being slashed.** This disparity amounts to racialized austerity and places the burden of economic restraint squarely on Indigenous peoples, who already face systemic underfunding and structural disadvantage.

Let me be clear: this policy is not neutral. It flies in the face of Canada's own human rights laws. Canada cannot claim a commitment to reconciliation while cutting the very services that support our communities. These cuts will deepen inequalities in housing, health care, education, public safety, and more—while also undermining Canada's legal obligations under Section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Kahnawà:ke is appalled at the Carney government's decision to dramatically cut this funding from Indigenous Services Canada—especially in the wake of First Nations opposition to Bill C-5. These cuts are not just fiscal—they are a direct assault on our rights and future.

Prime Minister Carney met with Chiefs in Ottawa merely weeks ago. **Not once were these cuts mentioned.** Was silence part of the strategy to secure photo ops, while avoiding accountability?

**Kahnawà:ke will not be forced into submission.**

In response to these unjust actions, we will now impose measures to counteract and recoup losses caused by these cutbacks. To start, **we will explore implementing tolls on the major highways that run through our Territory**—a sovereign measure that marks the first of many steps to protect our people and assert our jurisdiction.

Let's be absolutely clear: **this is not an action against the Canadian people.** It is a direct response to a government that has failed both us and its own citizens—so early into its term.

We continue to seek peaceful co-existence. But history has shown us that, time and time again, your government pursues policies designed to erase us. **We will not sit quietly.**

If Canadians want to see a different path forward, we urge you: **call your elected officials. Demand that they come to the table. Don't let them hide behind bureaucracy and empty platitudes.**

We will not stand by while our rights are eroded. Real equality is not a line item to be trimmed—it is the law. We call on the federal government to reverse these cuts immediately and to recommit to meaningful investment in First Nations communities. Reconciliation requires action, not empty promises.

Our message is simple—reconciliation without respect, transparency, and justice is not reconciliation at all.

Niawen

### More information:

- Bill C-5, also known as the Building Canada Act, seeks to fast-track the approval of major development projects by giving federal Cabinet sweeping authority to designate projects as being in the “national interest,” exempting them from existing environmental laws and bypassing the legal requirement to meaningfully consult and accommodate Indigenous communities prior to project approvals.
- The proposed legislation was developed without any consultation or opportunity for input from Onkwehón:we rights holders. This violates Article 19 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which requires free, prior, and informed consent prior to adopting legislative measures that impact Indigenous peoples.
- While the federal government consulted provincial governments during the drafting of the bill, Onkwehón:we people were excluded entirely. This disregard is especially troubling given the bill's potential to permanently alter how decisions are made about unceded lands, water, and resources.