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PRESS RELEASE

Three Algonquin First Nations Call for Halt to Questionable “Algonquins of Ontario” Agreement-in-Principle Process: Demand Territorial Overlap be Immediately Addressed

(Mattawa, Algonquin Territory/June 15, 2015) Today the Chiefs of the three Algonquin First Nations of Wolf Lake, Eagle Village and Timiskaming called on the Algonquins of Pikwakaganan and the governments of Canada and Ontario to immediately halt the referendum process on an Agreement-in-Principle which will lead to the extinguishment of Algonquin Aboriginal Title and Rights in what is now known as Ontario.

In January 2013, our three Algonquin First Nations submitted a Statement of Asserted Rights (SAR) to the governments of Ontario, Quebec and Canada. A copy was also provided to the Algonquins of Pikwakaganan. These parties were also provided with a map of the Territory over which our three Algonquin First Nations assert Aboriginal Rights and Title.

The Algonquins of Pikwakaganan Chief & Council and the federal and Ontario governments had plenty of time to meet and address our concerns regarding the territorial overlap, yet on Friday June 12, 2015, the government of Ontario issued a press release on behalf of the governments of Ontario, Canada and the so-called “Algonquins of Ontario” announcing that the three parties have initialed an Agreement-in-Principle to extinguish Algonquin Aboriginal Title and Rights in Ontario. This agreement ignores and stands to prejudice the title, rights and interests of our three First Nations who have Algonquin Title and Rights on both sides of the Ottawa River.

The Ontario, Canada and “AOO” press release announced, “The next step in the process is for the Algonquins of Ontario to vote on the proposed agreement-in-principle.” We respectfully disagree.

Chief Harry St. Denis said, “The Algonquins of Ontario are a policy fiction. We are Algonquins of the Ottawa Valley – we have rights in Ontario and Quebec - and the provincial boundary is being used to ignore our legitimate rights.”

The three Algonquin Chiefs are today confirming that they strongly object to the Pikwakaganan Chief & Council's decision to proceed with the extinguishment of Algonquin Aboriginal Title in the overlap area. The "AOO" AIP has implications for the Aboriginal Title and Rights of Timiskaming, Eagle Village and Wolf Lake on the Ontario side of the Ottawa River, and neither their consent nor meaningful input has been obtained to ensure that their rights are not adversely affected.

Eagle Village Chief Lance Haymond stated, "We fully expected the Pikawakaganan Chief & Council to meet with our three Algonquin First Nations to address our Algonquin Aboriginal Rights and Title in what is now known as Ontario, prior to taking any further action on the negotiation process with the governments of Canada and Ontario. It has been over two years since we have put the Algonquins of Pikwakaganan and the governments of Canada and Ontario on formal notice of our asserted rights in portions of the territory over which Pikwakaganan, Canada and Ontario are negotiating, and we are greatly concerned that no steps have been taken to address our concerns."

Timiskaming Chief Terence McBride added "Our three Algonquin First Nations object in the strongest possible terms to the so-called "Algonquins of Ontario" AIP being initialed by Mr. Robert Potts without first addressing our Algonquin Aboriginal Rights and Title as set out in the SAR Territory."

The three Algonquin Chiefs also confirmed today that they will continue to take necessary action to ensure that their Rights, Title and interests are protected from extinguishment via the so-called "Algonquins of Ontario" negotiation process.

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