

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

UPDATED - February 22 - Community Update on Fuel Seepage (Industrial Spill)

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – 22, Enniska/February 2024)

The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK), the Kahnawà:ke Environment Protection Office (KEPO), and Environmental Health Services (EHS) of Kahnawà:ke Shakotia'takehnhas Community Services (KSCS) wish to provide an update to the community regarding the ongoing response to the fuel seepage that was first discovered in the area of Zachary Road.

Water samples taken in several areas have shown unsafe levels of Petroleum Hydrocarbons (PHC) in :

1. In the ditch across the street from the site in the Industrial Blvd area of Chateauguy
2. Along the right bank of the Suzanne River upstream of the Zachary Road site.
3. In the ditch near the most impacted residence at Zachary Road

Preliminary laboratory results show that all PHC samples collected along the Suzanne River from Chateauguy down to the affected area near Zachary Road are Class #2 Diesel and heating oil. Inspections have ruled out any leakage coming from the residence's tank on Zachary Road. Since there is no evidence of a third potential source at this time, KEPO suspects that the site in the Industrial Boulevard area is the source of the fuel seepage, which we will now refer to as an industrial spill. However, Environment Canada is conducting additional testing to further confirm this theory, which is expected to be complete within a few weeks. Regardless, mitigation and remediation efforts will continue.

Water samples collected downstream of the temporary sand dams constructed at Zachary Road have lower levels of PHC, meaning the dams have successfully contained a majority of the contaminants. Reports of minimal fuel slicks in the Seaway near the snow dump were likely a result of damage to the structures caused by fluctuating weather, and additional maintenance to the dams will be performed to restore their effectiveness.



On February 20, with approval from landowners, construction began on additional sand dams further upstream, immediately along the boundary with Chateauguy. The creation of an additional temporary diversion pond in this area will be required as flows increase with spring melt. These efforts will further mitigate the impacts to Kahnawà:ke and Kahnawà:kehrónon by allowing the PHC to be collected and filtered out of the water upstream, with filtered water then re-introduced to the river. Heavy equipment access to the lot was granted by landowners on the Chateauguy side which was the closest road access.

In order to preserve the confidentiality of all parties and to avoid any legal liability, the names of individuals and companies involved will not be published at this time. However, a working group has been established to respond to this crisis and is committed to reducing the impacts on the environment, community members, and to identifying those responsible for this event and ensuring that they are held accountable.

For inquiries regarding home water and air quality, contact EHS at 450-635-9945. Environmental concerns can be directed to KEPO at 450-635-0600.

A previous version of this release contained inaccurate characterization of the Diesel Fuel type due to technical translation issues with French documentation provided to the Fuel Response Working Group. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused.

- 30 -

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