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Tsi Nahóten Karihwanákere No'nenk News Release

Mohawk Chiefs Discuss Tobacco

For immediate release

(Kahnawà:ke – 15, Onerahthkó:wa/May 2008) Grand Chief Michael Ahrírhon Delisle, Jr. initiated and hosted a conference call with Chiefs from Tyendinaga, Six Nations and both the “American” and “Canadian” sides of Akwesasne this morning to discuss the latest developments on the issue of tobacco.

The main topics of discussion were the Parliamentary Hearings on Contraband Tobacco; Public Security Minister Stockwell Day's recent Native tobacco crackdown initiative; and the Mohawk communities' strategies to address the current uncertainties related to the issues within the Territories.

“In many ways it was encouraging to hear that we are, for the most part, all on the same page,” said Chief Delisle. “We share the same concerns about organized crime infiltrating the community through this industry; the government's efforts to criminalize the entire industry and, by extension, the communities; and their (the governments) reluctance or outright refusal to meet with us on this issue.”

“We have re-committed ourselves to sharing information and working together,” he continued. “It was strongly suggested that each community appear at the ‘Contraband Tobacco hearings’ in Ottawa, as well as to have the Iroquois Caucus make a formal presentation as well – much like the C-30 hearings last month.”

Chiefs Wes Benedict and Cheryl Jacobs of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, Chief Lorraine White of the St. Regis Tribal Council, Chief Claudine Albert of Six Nations and Grand Chief Donald Maracle of Tyendinaga took part in the hour-long discussion.

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