



*Tsi Nahò:ten Karihwanákere Nó:nen'k*

# PRESS RELEASE

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## MCK in opposition to Bill C-53

### For Immediate Release

**(Kahnawake – 20, Seskehkó:wa/September 2023)** The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke would like to inform the community that the Council of Chiefs is in support, along with other First Nations from across Turtle Island, to **stop** the Federal Government from passing Bill C-53.

Bill C-53, which was introduced in the House of Commons on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023, would recognize the Métis Nation of Ontario's communities under *Section 35* of the Constitution as "rights-holders".

"Once again, the Federal Government is bypassing their duty to consult by passing legislation without the free, prior, and informed consent of First Nations and has tabled this legislation without debate or input from the people who will be directly impacted by this proposed bill," said Intergovernmental Relations Portfolio holder Ratsénhaienhs Ross Montour.

Today, both Ratsénhaienhs Ross Montour and Ohén:ton Í:iente ne Ratitsénhaienhs Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer are in Ottawa to support the First Nations that will be negatively impacted by this proposed legislation and to continue to protect the rights of all First Nations.

"We are here today to remind Ottawa that it needs to be transparent and work with First Nations before creating Métis lands where none have existed historically. The Federal Government's failure to properly address our collective concerns goes against Reconciliation and is a form of modern colonization," said Sky-Deer.

On several occasions, more than fifteen (15) First Nations and the Ontario Regional Chief sent letters to Canada that went unanswered until fourteen (14) days before the agreement was signed. Ottawa's last-minute response is unacceptable.

"Throughout this entire process, First Nations have been left in the dark, and we are putting Canada on notice that we must be part of any discussions pertaining to assigning Section 35 Aboriginal rights to any other group. As the Original Peoples, that jurisdiction belongs to us, and not Canada," added Sky-Deer.

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