



Kahnawà:ke Ratitsénhaiens

Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke

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Tsi Nahóten Karihwanákere No'nenk News Release

Notice to the community regarding 'Membership lawsuit'

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – 19, Kentenhkó:wa/November 2014) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) would like to advise Kahnawà:kehró:non that it met with its Legal Services team on Monday to discuss the lawsuit with respect to mixed couples residing on the Territory. The MCK had been served notice on October 30, 2014 by the law firm of Grey Casgrain on behalf of seven persons.

While the MCK cannot comment on certain aspects and details of the case, Chief & Council would like to inform the community that the lawsuit could potentially impact First Nations across the country.

"There is a real danger that an outside court – in this case the Quebec Superior Court – could deal a huge blow to First Nations jurisdiction across the country should it side with the plaintiffs," said Grand Chief Michael Ahríhron Delisle, Jr. "This is not fear-mongering. It's a fact."

"We are of the strong opinion that the Canadian court system is not the place to settle our disputes," he continued. "It's always best to find solutions within the community."

The MCK has a deadline of 12 Tsothóhrha/December to file its initial response to the lawsuit. The plaintiffs are seeking to obtain several declarations from the Court, including that certain sections of the *Kahnawà:ke Membership Law* be declared inoperative under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and that non-Natives are entitled to reside within the Territory with their spouse and children. They are also asking the Court to order the MCK to pay each plaintiff \$50,000.

"We have an obligation to defend the community's right to create, administer and adopt our own laws," he concluded. "The will of the people is paramount."

The issue was discussed at length at last evening's Fall Community Meeting.

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