



MOHAWK UNIVERSITY

MOHAWK NATION OF GRAND RIVER

To: Minister Andrea Khanjin for the Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks (Ontario), Minister Prabmeet Sarkaria of the Ministry of Transportation, Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy for the Ministry of Finance (Ontario)

Cc: Minister Steven Guilbeault for the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (Federal), Minister Gary Anandasangaree for the Ministry of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Minister Patty Hajdu for the Ministry of Indigenous Services, Minister Dominic LeBlanc for the Ministry of Public Safety (Federal), MPs and MPPs within the Grand River, Mayors and officials of the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA)

Re: Establishment of Mohawk Environmental Protection and Sustainability Initiative (MEPSI) – SG0500-241102-010001

Letter Code: SG0501-241102-T00001

Office: Secretary-General's Office

Date: November 2, 2024

Subject: Notification of the Mohawk National Transportation and Safety Initiative (MNTSI)

Dear Ministers, Members of Parliament, Municipal Leaders, and Representatives of the Grand River Conservation Authority,

I am writing to formally notify you of the establishment of the Mohawk Environmental Protection and Sustainability Initiative (MEPSI), a program that reflects the Mohawk Nation's sovereign role and commitment to environmental stewardship within our traditional territories.

Mandate and Purpose

MEPSI has been created in accordance with the Haldimand Pledge (1779) and Proclamation (1784) and our enduring duty to preserve and protect the lands and resources entrusted to us. This initiative embodies the principles of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and sustainable resource management to support the ongoing preservation of our environment and assert our rights to govern environmental matters within the Haldimand Tract.

Key Components

- **Sovereign Control:** MEPSI affirms the Mohawk Nation's exclusive authority over environmental governance within the Grand River and Acquired Territory. Through this initiative, we will oversee resource use, establish conservation practices, and conduct environmental assessments according to our established legal rights.
- **Ecosystem Preservation:** Our commitment includes measures to protect biodiversity, secure water sources, and undertake land restoration projects that align with our cultural values and traditional responsibilities.
- **Collaborative Engagement:** MEPSI seeks to engage local governments, agencies, and stakeholders in cooperative efforts that respect our jurisdiction and promote shared goals for sustainable environmental practices.
- **Awareness and Education:** MEPSI will support educational programs to raise awareness about environmental stewardship both within our communities and with neighboring entities.

Constitutional Duty and Legal Precedent

We emphasize that the Haldimand Pledge and Proclamation establishes a constitutional duty for all Canadians, including government representatives, to recognize the exclusive rights of the Mohawk Nation of Grand River. In this respect, obtaining our consent is essential prior to implementing any external initiatives that may impact our lands or resources.

Requests for Acknowledgment and Collaboration

In support of our shared environmental goals, we respectfully request that your office:

1. **Recognize MEPSI** as a legitimate, Mohawk-led initiative dedicated to environmental protection and sustainable practices within our traditional territories.
2. **Collaborate with MEPSI representatives** to ensure alignment between local, provincial, and federal policies and our environmental stewardship framework.
3. **Support the enforcement of our rights** regarding land use and environmental oversight to prevent unauthorized claims or activities on our territory.

Conclusion

The Mohawk Environmental Protection and Sustainability Initiative is a significant step toward reaffirming our rights and responsibilities as stewards of our lands and resources. By acknowledging and supporting this initiative, your office will contribute to the sovereignty of the Mohawk Nation and foster a collaborative approach to tackling shared environmental challenges.

We look forward to your acknowledgment of this initiative and anticipate a constructive dialogue that promotes mutual respect and cooperation in environmental governance.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Doolittle UE

Secretary-General

Mohawk Nation of Grand River

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Directive from the Office of the Secretary-General of the Mohawk Nation of Grand River

Directive Title: Mohawk Environmental Protection and Sustainability Initiative (MEPSI)

Directive Code: SG0500-241102-020001

Office: Secretary-General's Office

Date: November 2, 2024

Issued by: Benjamin Doolittle, Secretary-General of the Mohawk Nation of Grand River

In response to the pressing need for safeguarding Mohawk lands, waters, and ecosystems, this directive establishes the Mohawk Environmental Protection and Sustainability Initiative (MEPSI). This initiative reaffirms the Mohawk Nation's exclusive authority over environmental governance across the Grand River and Acquired Territory, prioritizing sustainable management and the protection of both cultural and natural heritage. Through this directive, the Mohawk Nation asserts its inherent rights over land, air, and water, embracing a model of environmental stewardship that reflects our cultural principles and respect for all forms of life.

Mandate

The MEPSI establishes a comprehensive framework for the independent regulation of environmental practices within the Grand River basin and Acquired Territory. This framework is informed by the Riparian Doctrine, asserting our interests in land and water that extend outward to Lake Erie and the six-mile boundary of the Grand River. This approach reflects the Mohawk Nation's sovereign claim over our lands and waters, guided by precedents in UN Security Council resolutions that recognize the "acquisition of territory" as a fundamental aspect of sovereignty, particularly as stated in Resolution 242 (1967).

The **Riparian Doctrine** is a foundational principle of water law that grants rights to landowners whose property borders a watercourse. It entitles the Mohawk Nation of Grand River to reasonable use of water within our territory, preserving both the water quality and ecosystems that are essential to our way of life. These rights extend along the Grand River's six-mile boundary and outward to Lake Erie, recognizing the Mohawk Nation's enduring role as stewards of the land and water.

Our claim to the Grand River and adjacent lands also involves **territorial borders** shared with Canada and the United States. The Treaty of Ghent and subsequent agreements established boundary commissions between the U.S. and Canada, but it is essential to note that the Mohawk Nation of Grand River was not party to these agreements. The United Kingdom, on behalf of Canada, participated in these treaties without consulting or securing consent from the Mohawk Nation, an oversight that continues to affect our rights today. We affirm that these borders, defined without Mohawk participation, do not diminish our sovereignty or our rights over lands within the Grand River and Acquired Territory.

Moreover, under Canadian constitutional law, the Haldimand Pledge and Proclamation are part of Canada's constitutional framework, guaranteeing exclusive use and rights for the Mohawk

Nation within the Haldimand Tract. In the **Re Manitoba Language Rights Case**, the Supreme Court of Canada held that any subsequent Canadian law contradicting established constitutional pledges, such as the Haldimand Proclamation, would be deemed invalid or void. Accordingly, any federal or provincial law that contravenes these rights must be retracted, as it fails to uphold the constitutional guarantees upon which Canada itself was established.

Purpose

MEPSI is committed to:

- **Preserving Natural Resources:** Implementing practices that safeguard water, air, land, and biodiversity.
- **Asserting Regulatory Rights:** Establishing the Mohawk Nation's rights to regulate environmental practices, asserting jurisdiction over all activities impacting our natural resources.
- **Creating a Blue Belt Conservation and Stewardship Platform:** Developing an innovative platform to manage environmental responsibilities effectively and transparently.

Scope

The MEPSI applies across all Mohawk lands, encompassing:

- **Airspace and Water Resources:** Including all riparian boundaries essential for ecological health.
- **Land Development and Resource Extraction:** Overseeing practices to ensure they align with sustainable management principles.
- **Waste Management and Conservation Efforts:** Enforcing regulations that reflect Mohawk values of stewardship, sustainability, and community-driven governance.

Core Principles

1. **Sovereign Control over Environmental Practices:** MEPSI affirms the Mohawk Nation's autonomous authority to establish and enforce environmental policies rooted in our inherent rights and responsibilities to our lands.
2. **Environmental Stewardship Education:** Educational initiatives under MEPSI will promote awareness of environmental sustainability, instilling a sense of responsibility and connection to the land among all generations.
3. **Restoration and Pollution Reduction:** MEPSI will prioritize land restoration efforts and pollution reduction strategies, collaborating with environmental experts and local communities to achieve these goals.
4. **Constitutional Grounds and Historical Clarifications:** The Mohawk Nation asserts that the Treaty of Ghent and subsequent UK-Canada international boundary treaty and agreements did not involve the Mohawk Nation, affirming that our historical sovereignty is undiminished by external border definitions. MEPSI draws upon the Mandamus

Principle, declaring that any laws or policies violating foundational rights or the Haldimand Proclamation are void within Grand River Territory.

5. **Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and Intergenerational Principles:** TEK will guide MEPSI's conservation approach, supported by the "Seven Generations Principle," ensuring that actions taken today consider impacts on future generations.
6. **Consultation and Collaboration:** MEPSI will actively seek community engagement, fostering partnerships with organizations that share our commitment to environmental protection and sustainability.
7. **Transparency and Accountability:** MEPSI will uphold a commitment to transparent monitoring of environmental activities, sharing regular updates on the Blue Belt platform for community access and engagement.

Implementation Strategies

1. **Regulatory Development and Community Engagement**
 - **Inclusive Framework Creation:** Establish regulations through collaborative efforts involving community members and environmental specialists, ensuring that policies reflect traditional knowledge and ecological science.
 - **Public Forums and Workshops:** Host events to gather input and educate community members about regulatory developments and environmental issues.
2. **Blue Belt Conservation and Stewardship Platform**
 - **Online Resource Hub:** The Blue Belt platform will serve as an accessible online trust that provides information on conservation initiatives, opportunities for community involvement, and resources for sustainable practices.
 - **Interactive Engagement:** Facilitate community participation through initiatives such as virtual workshops, educational content, and conservation challenges.
3. **Pollution Reduction and Land Restoration**
 - **Targeted Programs:** Develop and implement targeted programs focused on pollution prevention, land rehabilitation, and sustainable land-use practices in collaboration with environmental experts and local stakeholders.
 - **Monitoring and Reporting:** Regularly monitor and report on pollution levels and restoration efforts, ensuring transparency and fostering community trust.
4. **Independent Oversight and Community Reporting**
 - **Environmental Oversight Committee:** Establish an independent committee with representation from Mohawk elders, environmental scientists, and community leaders to oversee MEPSI's implementation.
 - **Community-Driven Reporting Channels:** Enable community members to report environmental violations through the Blue Belt platform, ensuring accountability and responsiveness.
5. **Land Recovery and Conservation**
 - **Land Recovery Objectives:** MEPSI has the authority to reclaim degraded lands or prevent unauthorized developments on Mohawk lands.
 - **Zero-Tolerance for Unauthorized Activities:** MEPSI enforces a zero-tolerance policy for unauthorized development, extraction, or pollution within Mohawk territories, with sanctions ranging from fines to legal actions.

6. Strategic Partnerships and Funding

- **Collaborative Opportunities:** Engage in partnerships with conservation NGOs and agencies that acknowledge Mohawk sovereignty, forming alliances on equal terms for mutual environmental goals.
- **Funding Opportunities:** Seek funding from bodies that respect Indigenous sovereignty, reinforcing MEPSI's financial independence for environmental initiatives.

Integration of Kareenna and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)

In the implementation of the Mohawk Environmental Protection and Sustainability Initiative (MEPSI), the Mohawk Nation embraces the principle of **Kareenna**, a Mohawk term that signifies song, frequency, and the interconnectedness of individuals within their environment. This concept underscores the harmonious relationship between people and nature, emphasizing how each person's actions resonate throughout the broader ecological landscape.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) will also serve as a foundational element of MEPSI. TEK, which encompasses the intergenerational knowledge and practices developed by Indigenous peoples over centuries, provides critical insights into sustainable land and resource management. By integrating TEK into MEPSI, we honor the wisdom of our ancestors, ensuring that our environmental practices are informed by a deep understanding of local ecosystems and their dynamics.

Together, Kareenna and TEK will guide MEPSI's approach to environmental stewardship, fostering community engagement and participation in sustainable practices that reflect our cultural heritage and the teachings of the land. By cultivating a sense of individual and collective responsibility, we promote the idea that our well-being is inextricably linked to the health of our ecosystems.

Through education and outreach, MEPSI will emphasize the importance of both Kareenna and TEK in shaping a culture of stewardship that respects our past, acknowledges our present, and protects the environment for future generations. This dual framework encourages community members to actively engage in conservation efforts and environmental decision-making, ensuring that our collective actions resonate positively across generations.

The Proverbial Longhouse and the Concept of Longbody

At the heart of the Mohawk cultural identity lies the **proverbial longhouse**, symbolizing not only the physical structure of communal living but also the profound philosophical understanding of our place within the cosmos. The longhouse represents the cyclical nature of existence, with the sun rising in the east and setting in the west, illustrating the interconnectedness of all life and the continuity of time. This symbol serves as a reminder that our true longhouse encompasses not just our immediate surroundings but the entirety of our experiences, including our ancestors, community, and the natural world.

Within this longhouse, we are part of a larger **Longbody**, a holistic view that transcends individual identity and recognizes the interconnectedness of all beings. The term "Longbody" derives from the Iroquois belief that the self extends beyond the individual to include one's belongings, family, ancestors, and the environment. This perspective encourages us to see our shared experiences as a collective narrative where our similarities outweigh our differences, regardless of culture or climate.

The **Longbody** serves as a powerful metaphor for total liberation, embodying a comprehensive understanding of our existence that encourages collaboration and shared responsibility. It is a framework used by teams and individuals alike, promoting unity in purpose and action. This interconnection emphasizes that each member of the community contributes to the health and well-being of the collective, fostering an environment where all voices are valued and heard.

In alignment with the principles of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and the cultural teachings of the Mohawk Nation, MEPSI will utilize the Longbody concept to enhance our understanding of environmental stewardship. By recognizing that we are all integral parts of a greater whole, we can approach our ecological practices with a sense of responsibility that honors our ancestors and secures the well-being of future generations.

This interconnected worldview also resonates with the research surrounding Pueblo parapsychology, which highlights the spiritual interconnection among all living and material things. As demonstrated in the work of Christopher Aanstoos and William Roll, the Longbody concept transcends the Iroquois tradition, reflecting similar beliefs within various tribal cultures, including those of the American Southwest. The enduring spiritual connections among community members, both living and deceased, and the sacred landscapes they inhabit are integral to their identity and survival.

By embodying the principles of the Longbody within MEPSI, we aim to foster a culture of holistic environmental awareness, where the ecological health of our land is seen as a reflection of the health of our community and the well-being of each individual.

Notification to the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA)

The Mohawk Nation of Grand River hereby serves notice to the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) regarding the establishment and directives of the Mohawk Environmental Protection and Sustainability Initiative (MEPSI). Recognizing that the GRCA has historically operated with assumed control over the Grand River and surrounding lands, we assert that the GRCA's exercise of authority on Mohawk lands without explicit consent constitutes intermeddling. Consequently, the GRCA shall be recognized as a *trustee de son tort*—a status applied to those who interfere with the rightful jurisdiction and sovereignty of another entity, here the Mohawk Nation, under the exclusive-use rights and riparian entitlements enshrined by the Haldimand Pledge and Proclamation and subsequent affirmations.

The GRCA board comprises local mayors who occupy Mohawk lands within the Grand River territory. The board's involvement in approving developments, land use, and environmental

matters on Mohawk lands reflects an attempt to circumvent the constitutional and legal obligations to respect Mohawk exclusive use rights, as well as riparian and other ecological interests. Such governance practices, by which mayors and municipal representatives engage in decisions affecting Mohawk territories, systematically avoid acknowledgment of the Mohawk Nation's sovereignty and legal rights. This board's oversight thus further infringes upon our established entitlements and bypasses the required observance of exclusive use provisions.

By this Directive, the GRCA is hereby advised that the Mohawk Nation of Grand River, through MEPSI, exercises sole authority over environmental stewardship, land use, and resource management across the Grand River and Acquired Territory. Any unauthorized or unapproved actions by the GRCA on these lands shall be regarded as an infringement on Mohawk sovereignty and may result in further actions to reclaim or restrict any illegitimate influences over these territories.

Notification to Local Mayors Along the Grand River

In addition to notifying the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA), the Mohawk Nation of Grand River, through the Mohawk Environmental Protection and Sustainability Initiative (MEPSI), will formally notify each mayor presiding over municipalities within the Grand River Territory. These officials, by their participation on the GRCA board and approval of developments and land use on Mohawk lands, may be deemed *trustees de son tort*—individuals who, by assuming control over lands and resources not rightfully theirs, engage in intermeddling with Mohawk rights and sovereignty.

This Directive asserts that any action taken by these officials, individually or collectively, that disregards the exclusive rights of the Mohawk Nation as established by the Haldimand Pledge and Proclamation and subsequent constitutional affirmations, constitutes a breach of our sovereign jurisdiction. Such actions effectively attempt to sidestep the constitutional obligations to uphold the Mohawk Nation's exclusive use rights and riparian interests within these territories.

Each mayor, upon receipt of this notification, is advised that further unauthorized or unilateral decisions affecting Mohawk lands, waters, or resources will be subject to scrutiny under the Mohawk Nation's authority through MEPSI. They are urged to respect the established jurisdictional boundaries and engage in cooperative dialogue to ensure that all governance practices reflect and honor the inherent rights and sovereignty of the Mohawk Nation of Grand River.

Notification to Members of Parliament and Provincial Parliament

In conjunction with notifying the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) and local mayors, the Mohawk Nation of Grand River will formally notify all Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) representing constituencies along the Grand River. These officials, by virtue of their legislative powers, play a crucial role in enabling local governance structures that encroach upon Mohawk lands and resources.

The presence of MP offices situated on Mohawk lands constitutes a violation of the Crown's pledges and obligations to uphold the Mohawk Nation's rights to exclusive use as established by the Haldimand Proclamation and reaffirmed by historical treaties. Furthermore, the legislative jurisdiction extended to cities, towns, and other entities that claim authority over Mohawk lands undermines the inherent sovereignty of the Mohawk Nation.

This Directive asserts that the actions of MPs and MPPs, whether through direct participation in local governance or by enabling legislative frameworks that diminish Mohawk rights, must be addressed. Each MP and MPP will be advised that their continued oversight and support of local governance structures infringe upon the constitutional guarantees of exclusive rights for the Mohawk Nation of Grand River.

By this notification, the Mohawk Nation calls upon all MPs and MPPs to engage in respectful dialogue and collaboration to ensure that their actions reflect an acknowledgment of our sovereignty and comply with the obligations established under the Haldimand Pledge and Proclamation and other constitutional frameworks. Any failure to uphold these commitments may result in scrutiny and potential legal actions to protect the Mohawk Nation's interests.

Notification to Parties of the Grand River Notification Agreement

As part of our commitment to upholding the rights of the Mohawk Nation of Grand River, we will notify all parties involved in the Grand River Notification Agreement. It is important to note that this agreement was established without the inclusion of Mohawk representation, and it serves to notify signatories regarding uses of Mohawk lands.

We assert that any actions or agreements concerning the use of our lands must involve direct consultation and consent from the Mohawk Nation. The absence of our voice in such agreements undermines the sovereignty and rights of the Mohawk people. Therefore, we will ensure that the parties are aware of our position and that future discussions regarding land use and management include our participation.

Notified Parties:

The following parties are formally notified of the establishment of MEPSI and are expected to align their operations and policies in accordance with the Mohawk Nation's sovereign authority over environmental matters within the Haldimand Tract.

Relevant Provincial Ministers:

- **Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks** – Oversight of provincial environmental policies and regulatory alignment with MEPSI objectives
- **Minister of Transportation** – In consideration of land use and infrastructure impacts within the Haldimand Tract
- **Minister of Finance** – Oversight of fiscal policies affecting land and resource management

Relevant Federal Ministers:

- **Minister of Environment and Climate Change** – To ensure alignment on environmental policies, sustainable practices, and conservation initiatives
- **Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations** – Responsible for upholding federal recognition of the Mohawk Nation's sovereignty and stewardship within the Haldimand Tract
- **Minister of Indigenous Services** – Engagement on policies affecting Indigenous communities, resources, and the preservation of traditional ecological practices
- **Minister of Public Safety** – For federal support on jurisdictional respect and collaborative enforcement on MEPSI's initiatives and environmental protocols

Federal and Provincial Representatives:

- **Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs)** representing constituencies within the Haldimand Tract, acknowledging the Haldimand Proclamation's mandate

Local Governments and Mayors as Peace Officers

- **Mayors and municipal officials within the Grand River region**, acting as representatives on the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) and in their capacity as peace officers, to ensure municipal alignment with MEPSI's objectives and sovereign jurisdictional rights

Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA):

- Notification to the GRCA board, including all mayors and officials involved in regional environmental and conservation matters, recognizing the Mohawk Nation's governance role and promoting cooperative engagement on sustainable management initiatives

Grand River Notification Agreement Signatories:

- All parties to the Grand River Notification Agreement, recognizing and upholding the Mohawk Nation's environmental stewardship responsibilities and rights within the Haldimand Tract

Each notified party is expected to formally acknowledge this directive and engage in discussions with MEPSI representatives to support mutual environmental goals within the framework of Mohawk sovereignty.

Official Notifications to Ontario Ministries Regarding the Mohawk Environmental Protection and Sustainability Initiative (MEPSI)

Minister Contact Information:

- **Hon. Andrea Khanjin**, Minister of Environment, Conservation, and Parks (Ontario)
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- **Hon. Prabmeet Sarkaria**, Minister of Transportation (Ontario)
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- **Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy**, Minister of Finance (Ontario)
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- **Hon. Steven Guilbeault**, Minister of Environment and Climate Change (Federal)
 - ★ **Contact:**
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- **Hon. Gary Anandasangaree**, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations (Federal)
 - ★ **Contact:**
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- **Hon. Patty Hajdu**, Minister of Indigenous Services (Federal)
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- **Hon. Dominic LeBlanc**, Minister of Public Safety (Federal)
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- **MPs and MPPs within the Grand River**
 - ★ **Contact:**
[Insert List of MPs/MPPs with Contact Information]
- **Mayors and officials of the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA)**
 - ★ **Contact:**
Chair: Chris White
Phone: 519-830-6725
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- **Board Members Contact Information**
 - ★ **Town of Grand Valley, Townships of Amaranth, East Garafraxa, Melancthon, and Southgate**

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- ★ **Town of Erin, Townships of Guelph/Eramosa, and Puslinch**
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- ★ **Municipality of North Perth and Township of Perth East**
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- ★ **Haldimand and Norfolk Counties**
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Conclusion

The Mohawk Environmental Protection and Sustainability Initiative (MEPSI) represents a pivotal step in the Mohawk Nation's journey toward environmental sovereignty. This directive, rooted in the principles of the Riparian Doctrine, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and our historical understanding of sovereignty, underscores our commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable practices. Through MEPSI, we affirm our rights and responsibilities as caretakers of our lands and waters, ensuring the well-being of our communities and future generations.

Call to Action

The Mohawk Nation of Grand River calls upon all community members to engage with the MEPSI initiative, participate in environmental stewardship activities, and uphold our shared responsibility for the land, air, and water. Together, we can ensure that our ecological legacy reflects our cultural values, honors our ancestors, and safeguards the natural world for future generations.

Original Signed: Benjamin Doolittle
Secretary-General
Mohawk Nation of Grand River

