

January 8, 2011

A message from Ardoch Algonquin First Nation and Pasapkedjiwanong Algonquin FN regarding the proposed development in the South March Highlands

Your Worship the Mayor and City Councillors
City of Ottawa

Re: Proposed Development in South March Highlands

We wish you well in this New Year.

Our communities have received numerous messages from a wide constituency regarding the proposed development of the South March Highlands. We have also read Grandfather William Commanda's letter to you. Our message, with all respect due your office, must be clear and unequivocal: we support all points in Grand father's letter and ask that you heed his lucid and wise message.

It is but repetition for us to reiterate the points that he has made. That being said, we encourage you to remember that the valley of the Ottawa river has since time immemorial been our home. We have none other, and we must care for it. This is the insight that guides our relationship to our home, its inhabitants and each other. This is also now your home. Considerations such as economic development are but one of many that must be taken into account when deciding on the fate of ancient trees, and creature habitat as well as that of the waterscapes of that area. We know that these considerations are absolutely not new to you and please understand that we do not mean to teach something that you already know well.

We believe that we all sit at the Medicine Wheel: This includes all creatures, plants and minerals. You may not agree and may even consider these beliefs quaint and out of step with the realities of the early twenty first century. But make no mistake: these beliefs and their underlying relationships have withstood the test of time, colonialism and human frailty.

You cannot assume that the disappearance of green areas will continue to make Ottawa a destination of choice. Social sensibilities have shifted and prospective citizens as well as visitors look for green spaces; considered, innovative, and creative development and civic respect for the intrinsic value of the forest, no matter how small.

We request that you enter into meaningful consultation with all consituencies as well as First Nations on the need for a proper archaeological assessment.

Please read William Commanda's letter to you with deliberate consideration and do not allow the South March Highlands to be forever changed.