



Ontario

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January 17, 2011

Hon. Michael Chan
Minister of Tourism and Culture
9th Floor, Hearst Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2E1

Dear Minister,

I am writing today regarding the development in the South March Highlands in Kanata, Ottawa in my constituency. I believe you have corresponded with Paul Renaud about his concerns that the archaeological study which allowed development to go forward was flawed.

During the application for a subdivision a developer is required to undertake an archaeological study to ascertain that the proposed site has little or no historical significance. In other words, developers hire an archaeologist in the hopes that he/she will find nothing.

The South March Highlands are just that, highlands, which are believed to have formed an island in the Champlain Sea. Thousands of artifacts have been found on nearby lands at a similar elevation which prove that this area was among the first parts of what is now Eastern Ontario to be inhabited after the last ice age. It is the contention of many of my constituents that the original archaeological study (2003) is flawed in that it is based on the assumption that there were no physiographic changes since the last ice age. For further information please see the comments of respected archaeologist Dr. Robert McGhee, attached.

In August 2010 Mr. Renaud wrote to you to say that he believed that there was a good chance this site is of historical significance. I understand you advised Mr. Renaud that you would only undertake a study if the City of Ottawa requested a new archeological study. However, the City, which does not have an archaeologist on staff, says it relies on the Province to review and approve archaeological studies. My constituents are frustrated with trying to figure out who is ultimately responsible in this chicken and egg riddle.

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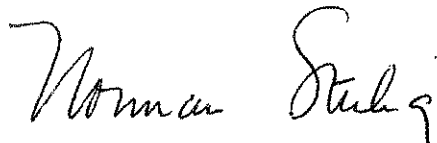
Recently five Chiefs of the Algonquin First Nation have become involved, calling for a halt to the development and demanding consultations. I understand that you informed Mr. Renaud that you are planning to upgrade the Standards and Guidelines of Consultant Archaeologists to require consultation with aboriginal communities. Given your recognition that consultation with the aboriginal community is lacking from the existing process, I ask that you consult with the Chiefs of the Algonquin First Nation regarding the archaeological study of this site.

The developer has been cooperative with the City of Ottawa and aboriginal groups but is anxious to proceed and is ready to begin clearing trees from this forested area. Time is of the essence as any new archaeological study would be hindered by the felling of trees.

If there are significant artifacts to be found at this site, it is not the responsibility of the municipality to protect them; it is the responsibility of our Provincial and Federal Governments as all Ontarians and Canadians will benefit from the history they provide.

I am asking today that you halt development until an independent archeological study can be completed by the Provincial and/or Federal Government to determine the historical significance of this site for the people of Ontario and especially our aboriginal community. I would also ask for a meeting with you at your earliest convenience so that I might further explain this request.

Sincerely,



Norman W. Sterling, MPP
Carleton-Mississippi Mills

encl.

cc: Councillor Marianne Wilkinson
Mayor Jim Watson
Steve Hulaj, President, Kanata Lakes Community Association
Paul Renaud
Hon. Christopher Bentley, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs
Hon. Rick Bartolucci, Minister of Municipal Affairs
Hon. Dalton McGuinty, Premier