



MEMORANDUM

To: MNO Citizens

From: Gary Lipinski, MNO President

Date: February 6, 2015

Subject: Consultation on Ontario's Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Awareness Strategy

I am pleased to advise that the MNO is currently undertaking consultations on Ontario's recently announced Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Awareness Strategy (the "Strategy") based on our intervention and efforts to ensure Métis inclusion in this important initiative.

The attached presentation provides the following:

- details on the origin and general purpose of the Strategy,
- an overview of the MNO's interventions and engagement to date on the Strategy,
- the questions the MNO is looking for feedback on as well as how all citizens can provide input into this exciting initiative,
- contact information on how to provide your input.

In addition, the PCMNO will be discussing the Strategy at its upcoming meeting in February, so please feel free to pass on input and suggestions through your local or regional Métis leadership who will then bring them forward.

I look forward to seeing the results of this consultation in order to inform the MNO's participation in the Strategy in the future. As indicated, I think this Strategy is a wonderful opportunity to share information about the unique history, rights and role of Ontario Métis in this province.

Ontario's Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Awareness Strategy

***Consultation Presentation to
Metis Nation of Ontario Citizens and Communities***

February 2015



Métis Nation of Ontario

**Métis Nation
of Ontario** 

2014 ONTARIO BUDGET COMMITMENT

“Negotiated agreements with First Nation communities honour legal obligations and resolve longstanding land disputes in a way that benefits First Nations and Ontario as a whole. To promote constructive engagement with First Nation communities, the Province is moving forward with a new Treaty Strategy, including funding of \$7.9 million over three years. The strategy will include a treaty education and public awareness campaign to raise awareness of treaty and Aboriginal rights, and help facilitate meaningful relationships with Aboriginal communities by creating a common language and approach to treaty implementation. Successful implementation will raise public awareness and promote improved socio-economic outcomes for First Nations.”



MNO PRESIDENT LIPINSKI'S LETTER TO PREMIER

“The MNO applauds this commitment made to First Nations. The MNO believes increased education, awareness and engagement with Ontarians on the unique histories, rights and place of First Nations in this province is beneficial to all Aboriginal peoples. We wish your Ministry and First Nations all the best in fulfilling this important and laudable commitment. **With that said, the MNO also believes a complimentary but distinct Métis Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Strategy is necessary in order to ensure Ontarians are similarly educated and aware of the unique history, rights and place of Métis communities in this province.** As the home of the landmark *Powley* case, which recognized and affirmed the Aboriginal harvesting rights of the Sault Ste. Marie Métis community and set out the legal test that all Métis communities in Canada must meet in order to establish Aboriginal rights, it would be anomalous that a provincial strategy with the overarching goal of raising awareness on treaty and Aboriginal rights would not include any reference to the Métis.” – September 15, 2014



MINISTER ZIMMER'S LETTER TO MNO

“I am pleased to hear that you believe this is an important initiative we are undertaking. I also appreciate your comments on the role the Métis played in treaty-making in Ontario and recognize the importance of the 1875 Adhesion to Treaty #3 by the Métis of Rainy Lake and Rainy River to any discussion on treaties in the province. The unique history and role of the Métis in the treaty-making process is an important part of the education and public awareness goals of the Treaty Strategy. To that end, I have shared your letter with staff working on the Treaty Strategy and have asked them to reach out to the MNO to determine how we may engage with you as we move forward on this important work.” – November 6, 2014



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- In December 2014, MNO President Lipinski met with Premier Wynne who also confirmed that the MNO would be included in Ontario's Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Strategy related work.
- MNO has received some funding in the 2014/15 fiscal year in order to undertake consultations with its citizens and communities on this initiative generally and based on input received answer the following three questions. This report will be finalized by March 31, 2015 and will be used to inform future discussions with Ontario on implementation in future fiscal years.



CONSULTATION QUESTION #1

- Are there existing Aboriginal and/or Treaty Rights awareness initiatives currently under development or being actively implemented by the MNO that could be supplemented and/or leveraged for future treaty engagement efforts with Ontario?



CONSULTATION QUESTION #2

- What are areas of focus that could be incorporated into future public awareness activities that improve non-Aboriginal peoples understanding of Aboriginal and/or Treaty Rights?



CONSULTATION QUESTION #3

- What are potential new opportunities to provide effective and efficient Aboriginal and/or Treaty Rights public awareness activities, with emphasis on engagement at the local or community level?



NEXT STEPS

- Over the next few months, the MNO will be providing opportunities for MNO citizens, communities and staff to provide their input on these questions as well as other feedback.
- Based on these consultations, the MNO will prepare a report based on the input received to the Ontario Government that answer the questions above.
- This consultation report will also be circulated within the MNO.



PROVIDING YOUR INPUT

- If you have input, feedback or suggestions in relation to the Treaty Strategy and the questions set out above, please provide them to your local and/or regional MNO leadership who will bring them forward at upcoming meetings.
- If you would like to send an email or talk to MNO staff about this initiative further, please contact:

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