



ANISHINABEK NATION POLITICAL UPDATE MARCH 2017

Aanii,

“It’s not if you win or lose, but how much you tried and how fairly you played.” - Former Chief Jim McGregor, LNHL Co-Founding Father. That statement was indeed demonstrated this year in Mississauga, as over 3000 excited players, their families and fans from all over Anishinabe territories travelled near and far to play a game we all love. Moose Cree First Nation were excellent hosts this year and the planning committee did top notch job. I had the pleasure of introducing Minister Bennett to some of the finest hockey she will ever see.

In early March the COO Health Forum provided an opportunity for the Anishinabek Nation, under the lead of Chief Bressette, to solidify a plan with senior officials from the Ministry of Health towards Transformation in Health for our communities. The work ahead, fuelled by the Anishinabek Nation Chiefs Negotiating Team, is expected to not only seek opportunity from the province but also federally – to make certain that the Anishinabek take control of the health and well-being of our citizens in a manner that ensures optimum services in all facets of health, sooner, rather than later. I have every confidence in our team to succeed.

In 2015, the Anishinabek Nation held a Summit with many provincial ministers. Our portfolio Chiefs presented a very succinct number of issues and although there was follow-up in some areas, others still are on-going. Deputy Grand Chief Hare attended a Summit follow-up meeting in early March where various ministry representatives provided a status of how these outstanding issues are seeking resolve. Operational tables in a few areas, like MTO, have been created to better facilitate work in progress.

The Anishinabek Chiefs Committee on the Economy met in March to chart a course in a number of strategic areas. Innovation and Change, a new strategy, was a welcome direction that will see great opportunity for our young people forge ahead. The Anishinabek Nation Economic Blueprint is back on track towards implementation in a number of key areas and we hope to see some exciting and tangible results in the year ahead for our communities.

Both Deputy Grand Chief and I enjoy most, the community visits; last month we provided Anishinabek Nation orientation to newly elected councils, attended a long-standing land claim settlement celebration in Fort William, took part in two youth-focussed regional conferences on suicide, travelled to Namaygoosisagun and Pic Mobert, and supported Anishinabek families who attended the MMIWG Family Gathering in Six Nations. I was also in Nipissing and Rama for community events. I commend the high calibre of leadership within each of the Anishinabek Nation communities – your pride in showcasing achievements of your young with their families and how proudly you come together to celebrate and share these milestones is a testament to the strength of your community spirit, and it shows. Yes, we love being a part of that excitement.

In the early part of the month, I met with a noted expert and our Anishinabek Nation representative on the matter of Heritage and Burials. We continue to advocate towards the authority of our communities in directing how sacred sites, archeology, artifacts and related matters must be facilitated. This is very important work that the Anishinabek Nation will continue to pursue on behalf of our communities.

As the Co-Chair of the Great Lake Guardian Council, it was my pleasure to host a two-day gathering of Knowledge Keepers. We insist that the value of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) must play an integral role in protection of our Great Lake waters.

A bi-annual bilateral meeting with Minister McGarry, MNRF, occurred in mid-March. Among the critical issues of Aerial Spraying concerns, pressing for fairness and equal opportunity in aggregate, forestry and procurement, advancing the position on First Nation consultation and accommodation on the Black Sturgeon Dam, to the concern of regulating water levels within the Williams Treaty territory, I was very proud to invite a presentation to the Minister from First Nation fire representatives who wanted to highlight that they exist and ought to be considered to assist with forest fires.

The Anishinabek Nation held a joint meeting with the Iroquois Caucus that resulted in a joint statement issued on our collective concerns and opposition to the transport and storage of radioactive waste through our respective territories. More collaboration is planned.

Leadership Council had a one day meeting to attend to the Anishinabek Nation budgets cycle, recommendations on policy changes and other issues. The round-table discussions at these sessions always bring forward new concerns, opportunities and items that require follow-up. They also reviewed the draft priority planning document they worked on in later February. Once details are added that solidify a plan going forward, we will direct great effort to not only those high priority issues, but also to the realignment of our work, past, current and into the future, to our Anishinabe Chi'Naaknigewin and Dodemnaag.

We held a bilateral meeting with Minister Bennett on March 29th in Sudbury. I attended Kina Gbezhgomi Child & Family Services Sudbury office with the Minister where she made a public announcement specific to Child Welfare Prevention funding that her department is proving to communities in Ontario. The Anishinabek Nation then hosted a bilateral meeting with Minister Bennett to re-establish our joint commitment to the Bilateral Agreement we've had for some time. This arrangement benefits Anishinabek Nation communities as a venue to process community concerns and opportunities. Following this meeting I took the Minister on a community visit to Henvey Inlet First Nation where she met with Chiefs of the Waabnoong Bemjiwang Tribal Council in Henvey Inlet for a round-table discussion.

March also saw the announcement from the province on a First Nation utility rate reduction and elimination of delivery charges from Hydro One by late summer. I commend the Chiefs Committee on work well done in this area. Our residents in the Anishinabek Nation look forward to experiencing some level of relief from the soaring hydro bills we have all been struggling with.

And finally, I want to take a moment to express my appreciation to the communities of the Anishinabek Nation for supporting your leader's participation in the myriad of external Chiefs Committees that do progressive work on all our behalf. Without their continued support and assistance in asserting our collective interests and rights, our aspirations and opportunity, this work we do would be all the more difficult.

Chi'Miigwech



Patrick Wedaseh Madahbee
Grand Council Chief



Glen Hare
Deputy Grand Council Chief