

INDIGENOUS ACTION CANADA



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IndigenousActionCanada.ca

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

March 13, 2025

Dear Premier Ford,

RE: Development of Ontario's Natural Resources and recognition and respect for Indigenous rights during the Tariff dispute

We are writing to you to emphasize the importance of Indigenous rights in the development and management of natural resources within Ontario. As the Premier, you hold a critical responsibility in ensuring that the economic growth of our province does not come at the expense of Indigenous Nations and due respect for their inherent rights.

You are aware that the Province of Ontario recently settled an annuities claim with the Robinson Huron Treaty First Nations and acknowledged their legal interests in the natural resources in their territories. We are writing to remind you that Indigenous Nations are partners in Treaties signed with the Crown. They have legal title and legal interests in the natural resources in the province of Ontario.

The Government of Canada has also committed to reconciliation and upholding the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which includes the right to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) regarding projects that impact Indigenous lands and livelihoods. Additionally, the Supreme Court of Canada has affirmed, through numerous rulings, the Province's obligation to consult and accommodate Indigenous Nations when considering resource development projects.

Resource extraction and development projects—whether in forestry, mining, or other industries—have significant and often long-term impacts on Indigenous Nations. These projects must not proceed without meaningful consultation and collaboration with the First Nations peoples whose lands and waters are directly affected. Environmental degradation, loss of traditional lands, and economic inequities continue to be pressing concerns for Indigenous communities. The provincial government holds a duty to address these issues with integrity and commitment.

As you embark on negotiations related to the development of critical minerals or other resources, it is necessary to include the rights holders in your discussions and deliberations. One major difference between Canada and the United States is that Canada has agreed to uphold its treaty obligations. The work of Truth and Reconciliation in Canada must continue in good faith. Treaties must be respected and adhered to even within Canada's borders.

We urge you and your government to ensure that all natural resource projects are subject to rigorous consultation processes that respect treaty obligations and Indigenous rights. True reconciliation requires action. Economic progress must go hand in hand with respect for Indigenous sovereignty, traditions, and environmental stewardship. Indigenous Nations must be included in all discussions related to the development of resources, including discussions related to trade. Canada's international trading partners must be made aware that Canada honours its treaty obligations.

We appreciate your attention to this important matter and look forward to seeing Ontario take a leadership role in fostering respectful and sustainable relationships with Indigenous communities.

Sincerely, on behalf of Indigenous Action Canada

Lorraine Rekmans

C.

Mike Schreiner, Leader of the Green Party of Ontario

Marit Stiles, Leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party

Bonnie Crombie, Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party

Chief Abram Benedict, Ontario Regional Chief