



Chippewas of Kettle & Stony Point First Nation

6247 Indian Lane

Kettle & Stony Point FN. Ontario. Canada N0N 1J1

Date: May 12, 2025

To:

The Honourable Minister
Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism

Re: Response to Proposed Amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act – Schedule 7 of the Protecting Ontario by Unleashing the Economy Act, 2025 (Bill 5)

Dear Honourable Minister Graham McGregor,

The **Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation (CKSPFN)** write to express our **strong opposition and deep disappointment** regarding the proposed amendments to the **Ontario Heritage Act**, as outlined in **Schedule 7 of the Protecting Ontario by Unleashing the Economy Act, 2025 (Bill 5)**. These changes represent a significant threat to **Indigenous heritage protections**, and further entrench a pattern of legislative decision-making that dismisses the rights, histories, and responsibilities of Indigenous Nations.

CKSPFN has firsthand experience with the consequences of government disregard for Indigenous land rights and cultural sites. In 1942, our people were **forcibly removed from Stony Point (Aazhoodena)** by the Government of Canada under the guise of military necessity. Our sacred lands, burial sites, and community were desecrated and occupied without consent, and the trauma of that removal has never left our Nation. To this day, the legacy of this violation continues to affect our people. The province's current proposal to weaken Indigenous-specific protections in the Ontario Heritage Act **follows this same path of erasure and exclusion**, prioritizing development over the recognition of Indigenous histories and lawful stewardship of the land.

The proposed amendments would undermine the processes and tools that help identify and safeguard **burial grounds, sacred sites, and culturally significant landscapes**, many of which have yet to be formally documented but are well known and spiritually significant to our people. These protections are not discretionary — they are tied to our identity and inherent rights, protected under **Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982**, and further affirmed by the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**.

We wish to acknowledge the **letter of support submitted by Archaeological Research Associates Ltd. (ARA)**, which rightly **opposes the removal of archaeological and heritage requirements** that would infringe upon Indigenous Nations' ability to protect our cultural heritage. We are encouraged by ARA's solidarity and by their recognition that heritage protection must be led in partnership with Indigenous Peoples, not undermined through unilateral legislative change.



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Bill 5's proposed amendments do not reflect reconciliation. Instead, they **signal a re-entrenchment of colonial policies** that favor short-term economic gain over the long-term protection of land, memory, and law. These amendments make it easier to overlook Indigenous presence — both historical and contemporary — and signal a government unwilling to confront or correct historical wrongs.

We urge the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism to:

- **Immediately withdraw Schedule 7 of Bill 5** and halt any amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act that weaken protections for Indigenous heritage;
- **Formally consult and co-develop any future changes** to heritage legislation with Indigenous Nations in a manner consistent with the duty to consult and accommodate and the principles of **free, prior, and informed consent**;
- Acknowledge the direct and disproportionate impacts these changes would have on First Nations like CKSPFN, who have already suffered cultural destruction, land dispossession, and ongoing legacy harms from state-led development and removal.

CKSPFN remains committed to protecting our heritage, honoring our ancestors, and defending the places and stories that continue to guide our Nation. We stand not only for our people but with all Indigenous Nations across Ontario who are working to preserve our shared cultural heritage — for ourselves, and for the generations yet to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "KB", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Kimberly Bressette

Chief

Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation

cc:

- Verna George, First Nation Manager
- Mike George, CEO, Southwind Corporate Development/Three Fires Group
- Jessica Wakefield, Executive Director, Major Projects and IBAs, Three Fires Group and Consultation Lead, Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation
- Archaeological Research Associates Ltd.

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This letter is in support of the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation in response to Bill 5 (Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, 2025). Framed as an economic stimulus package, if passed this bill would impose:

- **Marginalization of Indigenous rights and environmental knowledge.**
- **Rollback of existing environmental protections.**
- **Increased risk to biodiversity and endangered species.**
- **Insufficient environmental oversight and assessment of development projects.**
- **Prioritization of short-term economic gains at the expense of long-term environmental sustainability.**

ARA remains committed in its support to the first peoples of Canada, their histories, languages and cultures. First Nations' relationship to the land is spiritual and that spiritual connection is constitutionally recognized and legally protected. Access to the land and participation in land use decision-making processes to protect their spirituality, cultural practices, and traditions has been a key concern for First Nations since European contact.

The Royal Proclamation, signed in 1763 by King George III, has driven the relationship between the Crown and Aboriginal Peoples. The Supreme Court of Canada, in 1973, in the Calder decision, recognized that Aboriginal title existed in law, and therefore could be enforced and further declared Aboriginal title to be “a right to the land itself.” According to the Supreme Court of Canada, the First Nation relationship and ownership of the land are legally recognized and constitutionally protected in Section 35 of the Constitution Act.

ARA strongly opposes Bill 5 which contains no affirmation to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples, as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). If passed, this bill is an infringement upon First Nations treaty rights and the province of Ontario's duty to consult, jeopardizing First Nations cultural heritage and the environment.

We demand the government of Ontario remove Bill 5 in its entirety and uphold the Government of Canada's duty to Indigenous peoples right to free, prior and informed consent that affect their lands, territories and rights.

Sincerely,

Archaeological Research Associates Ltd.