



# DELAWARE NATION COUNCIL

Moravian of the Thames

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To Whom It May Concern:

May 17, 2025

**Re: Proposed Dresden Landfill (on behalf of Eelūnaapéewi Lahkéewiit – Delaware Nation)**

Eelūnaapéewi Lahkéewiit stands in firm opposition to the proposed Dresden landfill, which is being pushed forward through Bill 5 without proper consultation, environmental safeguards, or respect for our inherent rights. As the original peoples of this land, we hold a sacred responsibility to protect our territory, our waters, our air, and the health and well-being of our people—now and for future generations.

Our Nation, like many other First Nations in Ontario, already faces deeply rooted health challenges that stem from colonization, systemic neglect, and environmental exploitation. These include significantly higher rates of chronic illness—such as diabetes, asthma, and heart disease—as well as limited access to equitable and culturally appropriate healthcare. Mental health struggles, rooted in intergenerational trauma and forced displacement from our lands, remain a critical and ongoing issue.

The proposed Dresden landfill would dangerously compound these existing burdens. Located alarmingly close to our community and the town of Dresden, this site poses serious and long-term environmental health risks:

- **Air pollution** from landfill gases such as methane and hydrogen sulfide would significantly increase respiratory illnesses, particularly for our most vulnerable—our children and Elders.
- **Leachate contamination** threatens local waterways, including the Sydenham River, a culturally and ecologically critical ecosystem that supports numerous species at risk.
- **Soil and food chain contamination** would further undermine our ability to gather traditional foods and medicines, impacting both our physical health and cultural survival.
- **The psychological, spiritual, and cultural toll** of being once again disregarded in decisions affecting our lands and health is profound and immeasurable.

This is not simply an environmental issue—it is a clear act of environmental racism and a violation of First Nation rights. Landfills and other hazardous infrastructure are disproportionately placed near First Nations communities across Ontario and Canada. This is not coincidence. It reflects the systemic exclusion of First Nations voices from land-use planning, colonial land policies that placed reserves on isolated or “undesirable” lands, and a long-standing pattern of ignoring First Nation concerns in pursuit of industrial and economic interests.

Reserves were often created on marginal lands without access to clean water, arable land, or natural resources. These areas are now being targeted as “convenient” locations for environmental hazards—such as landfills, sewage lagoons, and toxic waste sites—due to their remoteness and perceived lack of resistance. Historically, and even today, First Nations are rarely consulted meaningfully, if at all, when it comes to decisions about their surrounding lands.

The decision to exempt the Dresden landfill from full environmental assessment, and to override both municipal and First Nations opposition through Bill 5, is a blatant violation of our rights to free, prior, and informed consent as affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)—which Canada and Ontario have both endorsed.

The proposed Dresden landfill threatens not only the physical environment but also the cultural and spiritual health of our Nation. One of the most profound yet often overlooked impacts of environmental contamination is the disruption of access to traditional medicines.

For generations, Eelūnaapéewi Lahkéewiit has relied on the land for healing — gathering plants, roots, and other natural medicines from our territory, guided by traditional knowledge passed down through our Elders. These medicines are not simply natural resources — they are sacred gifts that are part of our relationship with the land, and central to our identity, wellness, and spiritual practices.

The contamination of soil and water from landfill leachate — which can carry toxic chemicals, heavy metals, and pathogens — poses a direct threat to the safety and availability of these medicines. If the plants we rely on grow in contaminated soil, or draw water from polluted sources, they may become unsafe to use or may no longer grow at all. This not only affects our physical health, but causes spiritual harm and contributes to the ongoing erosion of our culture and knowledge systems.

Furthermore, the loss or contamination of traditional medicines undermines our efforts to reclaim and revitalize Indigenous healing practices that are key to addressing the intergenerational trauma caused by colonialism, residential schools, and systemic health disparities.

Eelūnaapéewi Lahkéewiit does not consent to the Dresden landfill project. We demand that the Government of Ontario:

5. Halt the Dresden landfill immediately.
6. Uphold the protections of Bill 197, including the 3.5 km buffer zone for new landfill projects near communities.
7. Conduct a full environmental and health impact assessment, inclusive of cumulative risks and First Nation traditional knowledge.
8. Engage in meaningful, respectful consultation with Eelūnaapéewi Lahkéewiit and other affected communities, as required by Canadian and international law.

We will not remain silent while the health of our people and the safety of our land and water are put at risk for corporate gain. We call on all Ontarians and Canadians to stand with us in opposing this harmful project and demanding a future rooted in justice, health, and respect for First Nation sovereignty.

**In unity and defense of the land,**

**Chief Justin Logan**

*On behalf of Eelūnaapéewi Lahkéewiit (Delaware Nation)*