

**Joint Statement from the Participants in the Mediation of Ojibway Nation of Saugeen
Litigation in Federal Court - Friday, November 1, 2019**

The members of the Ojibway Nation of Saugeen (“ONS”) involved in the litigation have completed two days of hard work in mediation with the able assistance of Federal Court appointed mediator, Prothonotary Kevin Aalto, to work through their differences. This Joint Statement is to provide information about how the mediation is going as the community and its people rightly are keenly interested in what is happening as it affects all aspects of the life of this First Nation community. It is also being given so people in the community have enough information about what has happened that they do not need to wonder what is going on, and ask the people involved in the mediation for information. The mediation process is confidential, and all have agreed with the court not to discuss or say anything about the mediation until it is complete. It will avoid rumours, anger at, suspicions or unfounded guesses about what is occurring at mediation.

It is important to say the mediation is not complete, it is on-going and will be continued to ensure a result is reached as quickly as possible with the goal of ending the dispute in the community. This is good news. Here are some of the things that show good faith and movement toward a better community for all that have been agreed upon so far at the mediation.

First, steady progress in reaching a fair, transparent solution to the questions before the Federal Court have been made: both sides are recognizing the need for change in its governance code to provide clarity as to how the First Nation will be governed in the 21st century. A working group with equal representation from both sides of the litigation and which will be accountable to the community together with a neutral independent facilitator acceptable to all, will be set up immediately to create a draft governance code which will deal with governance matters such as how governments are chosen and removed. The community will be involved by giving their input, advice and suggestions on how governance code should look. A draft governance code will be created as soon as reasonably possible. The working group will use their best efforts to develop a draft by late spring 2020. The community will decide if the new governance code meets the expectations and aspirations of ONS and whether to adopt the governance code. Once the governance code has been accepted by the community, the selection of community leaders will be made using the new governance code.

More work is needed. There is room for respectful disagreement, but we must all work together towards positive constructive change.

There are concerns on both sides of the litigation about what will happen between now and when the new governance code is in place and being used. More mediation sessions are planned to discuss and resolve issues relating to governance before the new governance code is in place which will provide transparency, fairness and enhance the safety of all our people. All of these changes will continue the process of improving our governance and moving towards reconciliation between the people of ONS. Patience in the community is asked for while these additional goals are met. Going forward, we ask respectfully that all our members put positive energy towards this important initiative, and begin the healing process by not posting negative or hurtful comments about any ONS member. What this mediation process has taught us all is that we all love our community and want the best for its future.

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Approved by:

Edward Machimity
Eileen Machimity
John Sapay
Violet Machimity

Ron Machimity Sr.
Joyce Medicine
Betty Necan
Darlene Necan
Hilda Derosé
Desiree Jacko
John Machimity