

March 21st, 2002

Secrétaire
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Reference: Statement Regarding the Extension of Highway #30

Greetings,

My name is Eva Johnson and I'm the Coordinator of the Environment Office of the Mohawk Community of Kahnawake. Our mission is to "work on any issue that may have negative affect on the health and well-being of the community of Kahnawake". We also lend our support to others who may feel that they're not in a position to execute change by themselves. This brief is being presented with the hope that the destructive practices of over-development that presently have free-reign in society, will be curbed before all of nature is destroyed forever.

During the summer of 1990, the Quebec Ministry of Transport undertook the construction of a new highway that spanned from the City of Chateauguay and ended near the eastern boundary of our community. Unfortunately, Kahnawake had little influence as to whether this construction would be taking place, although it would ultimately change the drainage capabilities of our lands that border this highway.

After twelve years, we certainly can see, although we've been in a situation of drought, that the waters that once could circulate and drain off now stand for long periods of time causing damage to the trees and other foliage in those areas. The farming communities along the present highway 30 near Kahnawake must certainly be affected by the inability of their farm-lands to drain as they previously had before construction. Most recently, our community was requested to have a drainage system "opened up" so that farmers fields wouldn't have to be impacted by standing water so we know there is a problem with drainage.

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Careful reviews of aerial photos reveal that there was no flooding in those areas in the past and the most significant construction that took place that would affect drainage would be highway 30. So, in addition to the flooding that already exists along the south-eastern boundary of Kahnawake, we are being asked to assume the heavy truck traffic that is planned to be re-routed through highway 30/132. It is estimated that in excess of 5000 heavy trucks per day will be re-routed to our area and along with this additional traffic will come more air and noise pollution. The concern for safety is also on everyone's list of priority concerns.

What is evident again and was apparent when the initial construction of highway 30 began, is that the community of Kahnawake and how we might be impacted, was not even taken into account and is now a forced after thought.

Considering the relationships that have been established and re-affirmed with representatives of the Quebec Government, we would think that the MTQ's representatives who had been working tirelessly with the community of Kahnawake to gain cooperation for the extension of highway 138, would have been more forthright. However, this doesn't seem to be the case and no courtesy was extended to provide our administration the opportunity to be involved with either the planning of this project, including its feasibility.

Now, at the eleventh hour, we have been "advised" of the proposed plans by groups and individuals who have many of the same concerns as we have and not by any government officials or representatives. In addition to not even providing us with the relevant documentation and plans so our input or opinion could be expressed, when we finally do receive the information, unfortunately, many of us who haven't yet acquired French language reading skills cannot understand it.

So, to add to our disappointment, we can only give general concerns because of the nature of the documentation and haven't been provided with the time or resources to have an environmental consultant properly review the information package and provide us with their opinion.

However, we do have some suggestions regarding the project that doesn't have very wide-ranging support, except for government officials, and, they are:

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1. **ABORT THE PROJECT, IN ITS ENTIRETY** (The monies can be better spent at the local level, including improving health care).
2. The **NORTH** Option appears to be the most devastating to our environment and standard of acceptable disruption, vis-à-vis a huge increase in freight truck traffic. Hence, the **SOUTH** Option, although equally destructive to the environment because of the very nature of mega projects, would be the least disruptive to our community and we would prefer that the MTQ re-visit this option.
3. When mega projects are contemplated, all impacted peoples must be brought to the table at the planning stage and not the implementation stage. This present method of "consultation after the fact" is not at all acceptable.

In closing, let us reiterate again, our concern for this massive, \$197 million dollar project that will cause massive environmental changes, including air, noise and water pollution, not to mention the impact it will have on our highways and safety of our people.

We thank you for listening to our concerns.

Sincerely,

Eva Johnson, Coordinator
Kahnawake Environment Office

c.c. Mohawk Council of Kahnawake