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Chiefs of Ontario and First Nations Oppose Bill 23: More Homes Built Faster Act

(Toronto, ON – November 23, 2022) The Chiefs of Ontario express their full support for First Nations Leadership in their opposition to Bill 23: More Homes Built Faster Act, due to its clear violation of First Nations constitutionally protected, inherent and Treaty rights and its inevitable adverse environmental impacts on First Nations ancestral and traditional territories.

"The Government of Ontario's tabling of Bill 23 is a blatant violation of First Nations' inherent, domestic, and international rights over their ancestral and traditional territories," said Ontario Regional Chief Glen Hare. "Bill 23 will inevitably harm Ontario's environmental heritage and weaken land and water environmental protection."

Tabled on October 24, 2022, Bill 23: More Homes Built Faster Act is the Government of Ontario's latest omnibus bill that, if passed, will have detrimental impacts on nine different development and environment-related acts under the guise of addressing Ontario's housing crisis.

"First Nations have been given no opportunity, nor the adequate capacity to be consulted regarding the tabling of Bill 23 and its significant changes to Ontario's legislative and policy landscapes. It is deeply concerning to the Chiefs of Ontario that the mandate of the Indigenous Affairs Ontario (IAO) office, which is to ensure collaboration amongst ministries engaging and consulting with First Nations on policy and legislative changes, continues to be unfulfilled.

Unilateral legislative and administrative changes within Bill 23 without consultation or engagement with First Nations are unacceptable and an abuse of power. The unprecedented steps taken by the Government of Ontario violate existing Treaties and their will to systemically sell off resources will have dire consequences for First Nations and future generations.

First Nations are not stakeholders; we are sovereign Nations and are entitled to proper consultation based on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and mutual respect.

The Government of Ontario can no longer avoid its duty to consult with First Nations by delegating responsibilities and obligations to municipalities, developers, and project

proponents. The government's requests for after-the-fact commentary from First Nations regarding the conception of Bill 23 do not discharge the Crown's duty to consult. To move forward, First Nations require a clear commitment from the Government of Ontario to honour its duty to consult and to honour, respect, and uphold First Nations' inherent rights and jurisdiction.

The Chiefs of Ontario support First Nations Leadership and echo their opposition to Bill 23. I look forward to meeting with Premier Doug Ford, Greg Rickford, Minister of Indigenous Affairs, and other relevant ministers to discuss the impacts of Bill 23 and the value of protecting Ontario's natural ecosystems, lands, and waters from irreversible losses and damage for our future generations.”

Ontario Regional Chief Glen Hare

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The Chiefs of Ontario support all First Nations in Ontario as they assert their sovereignty, jurisdiction and their chosen expression of nationhood. Follow Chiefs of Ontario on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram @ChiefsOfOntario.

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