

KITCHENUHMAYKOOSIB INNINUWUG



NEWS RELEASE

Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug's voice regarding our connection to the land has been heard by the Superior Court of Ontario

Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug – July 31/06 – For immediate release – In the absence of adequate consultation, Justice G. P. Smith, on Friday, July 28, ruled against Platinex continuing its exploration activities on Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug traditional lands at this time.

“Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug are excited and pleased that we have been heard,” John Cutfeet, Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug councillor and spokesperson for the lawsuit, says. “This land was given to us by the Creator; it is our past, present and future. Now the Ontario Superior Court has indicated it understood our spiritual, physical, emotional and mental dependence on the land when Justice Smith said, ‘The land is the very essence of their being. It is their very heart and soul.’”

“We cannot and do not take the land for granted,” Cutfeet adds. “The land not only provides for us, it nurtures us; it is our teacher. However that gift does not come without obligation – it is our job to stand together to protect the Creator’s gift so that the land will continue to be there for all of us. That is what we have done for generations, what we did in signing the Treaty, and what is required of us if we are to live in balance and harmony.”

“Being silent in our own little world could defeat us,” Chief Donny Morris says. “We must look at the bigger picture and look to what this land offers. Our resources have been taken from us and we have not benefited from what has been extracted from our lands to be sold to the rest of the world. Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug signed a Treaty and that treaty must be honoured by the Crown. In sharing our land, our views and rights must not only be heard, but be understood so that the land is available to help us, not just those who grow rich at our expense.”

“In accommodating Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug’s rights, as one of the First Peoples, it is important to recognize that we have a right to life,” Cutfeet says. “That includes the ability to exercise our cultural values and beliefs with the land. Land that is eroded or polluted by industrial processes can no longer sustain our lives. For years, First Peoples have been told by governments and industry that their footprints can be erased. Too late, we learn they had insufficient knowledge or failed to act responsibly.

“Communities must be involved in consultation,” he says. “Children, youth, adults and elders in our communities have much to contribute if we are given the opportunity and are respected for our ways and for what we have to offer. Any decision relating to traditional lands is a community-based decision and cannot be made solely by the Chief and Council.”

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For more information contact:

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