



CHIEFS COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MATAWA CHIEFS COUNCIL CALL FOR REMOVAL OF PRIVATE-PROPERTY SIGN SPREADING HATE MESSAGE AGAINST FIRST NATIONS IN RING OF FIRE



THUNDER BAY, ON: The Matawa Chiefs Council today issued the following statement calling for the removal of a private-property sign in Geraldton, Ontario that spreads a hate message against First Nations in the Ring of Fire:

“The ‘Tread on Them’ private-property sign at 6 Rosedale Point Road in Geraldton in the Municipality of Greenstone (located off Highway 584, which is a high-traffic area) is taken by the Matawa Chiefs Council (the MCC) as a hate message and extremely racist. The MCC believes it is in reference to Premier Doug Ford’s [March 16, 2018 comments](#) regarding his willingness to hop on a bulldozer himself to build roads to the Ring of Fire. The MCC also believes that this is the broader context that has allowed this kind of extremist (and threatening) ideology to take root. The Matawa Chiefs Council is demanding this not be ignored and call on the Municipality of Greenstone to assist in its removal.”

The yellow sign is part of a 4-part series that perpetuates a troubling trend of far-right radicalization influenced by political elites on both sides of the border whose rhetoric work to exploit racial attitudes. These racist ideals, which are understood by them as wokeism, are now being accepted as free speech and are given space as infiltrated in Geraldton, Ontario. This should not be allowed. Hate should not be condoned, and communities should not be complicit in its spread.

When Premier Doug Ford first made his divisive and threatening bulldozer comment almost 7 years ago, it set the tone for our current relationship which is, seen by us, as having little (to no) progress. His comments and the Ontario government's approach has also emboldened citizens of Ontario to show dehumanizing attitudes towards us and our positions on our homelands. Regardless, this does not deter us from saying and doing what we believe in. Our people cannot be concerned with their safety if there is any progress to take place.

Currently, the MCC are considering bringing a claim of discrimination to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario regarding the 'Tread on Them' private-property sign to challenge hate in the province. In recent years, Ontario Human Rights Commission has reported seeing a rise in hate activities against individuals and groups based on colour, ethnicity, race, creed, gender, and sexual orientation, among other grounds. For the Matawa Chiefs Council, it is truly troublesome when children and youth have no choice but to see it every day in our traditional territory."

— 30 —

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