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## **AROLAND FIRST NATION PUBLIC STATEMENT ON BILL 5 AND ON PREMIER FORD'S MISLEADING AND INCORRECT STATEMENTS TO THE MEDIA ALLEGING AROLAND SUPPORT FOR RING OF FIRE MINING**

June 9, 2025

Premier Ford is quoted in a Toronto Star article of June 5, 2025, as saying that he intends to apply BILL 5 to open up the Ring of Fire for mining as soon as possible and mentions the name of Chief Sonny Gagnon of Aroland First Nation as allegedly supporting this through an agreement. Aroland and Ontario do have a recent agreement but it pertains to that part of the Marten Falls community access road ("MFCAR") that is in Aroland territory only. The agreement is not confidential, and its contents can be examined to verify that as Chief Gagnon says, "Aroland does not in any way indicate in that agreement or anything else we have published or signed, consent for mining in the Ring of Fire."

"The southern part of the MFCAR is in Aroland Territory and Marten Falls is our neighbour First Nation we share lands with. Aroland has never said Marten Falls cannot build a road so that it is no longer remote; if they want to have road access to the highway system like we do, they should be able to," says Chief Gagnon. "But that has to be done right – with proper assessment and protection measures and Aroland involvement and consent. The agreement with Ontario is about that, and some necessary electrical power to our community. We were to get funding to support that initiative and so far we have received nothing and instead have spent our own dollars trying to ensure our community has basic services."

"This road only became an issue when the Ontario government through its own means tried to make it into not just a road for Marten Falls to have access south to the highways, but for mining companies to come in and out of the Ring of Fire area – to open up the area to mining, because there are no roads to it now. We do not consent to that. We have consistently in writing indicated that no such decision on what happens to the Ring of Fire should be made until the regional assessment being conducted now and being co-led by many First Nations including Aroland, is complete, and indicates that mining in this sensitive and vulnerable peatlands region is safe for humanity, for us, for wildlife, climate and water," says the Chief. "We don't yet know that. More important – Ontario does not yet know that."

Aroland First Nation objects to Bill 5, the disrespect shown by the process toward it, and the threats to First Nations, the environment, democracy and basic human rights that its contents contain. "We do not stand with Ontario in support of Bill 5. We do stand in support of the other First Nations in Ontario who are opposed to Bill 5 and working to have it thrown out."

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