



**YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR LAWS, BUT YOU CAN'T CHANGE OUR RIGHTS:**

**IN THE FACE OF ONTARIO'S BILL 5 AND CANADA'S BILL C-5**

**EABAMETOONG AND OUR NEIGHBOURS MUST HAVE A SEAT AT THE TABLE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 12, 2025: EABAMETOONG, ONTARIO

“It’s really no surprise that both governments are now trying to undo important parts of the law that First Nations are skilled at navigating to protect our rights. Our message to Ontario and to Canada has been clear this spring: **you can change your laws, but you can’t change our rights,**” said Chief Solomon Atlookan.

Eabametoong First Nation has been proactive since hearing of the very real impacts this trade war with the USA could have upon our membership. We have written to Ontario and Canada in early March to suggest a new way of working together in the face of this threat. We recommended forming a War Council together with neighbouring First Nations and Treaty partners to consider new and productive ways to work in partnership, but BOTH crown governments have now gone and drafted legislation that uses the US trade situation as justification for running roughshod over their Treaty commitments and have written again to the Premier and Prime Minister last week warning that there is a better way forward in respectful partnerships.

Chief Atlookan said, “EFN and our neighbouring First Nations should be the ones the crown governments are partnering with to consider how best to manage this situation. We will be here long after the tariff nonsense is sorted out, and we are interested in improving lives throughout the north, but that does not mean uncontrolled development. We must have a seat at that table, with our members as informed decision makers. Anything less will be challenged in court and will unfortunately drive away actual business opportunities... what they are doing is just a short-sighted power grab. We want to co-write the regulations and

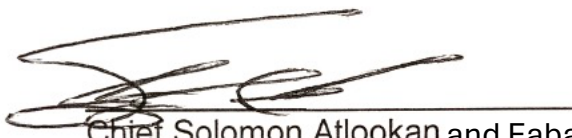
develop new legislation that draws upon our collective Indigenous Law for our shared region with other First Nations. Shared governance of the area is what the real Treaty was about. It is time to get that on the table.”

EFN looks forward to collaborating with all our neighbours moving forward. We have been working hard at the co-led Regional Assessment process with Canada and making progress on ways to consider the impacts of different future projects and the types of futures that are possible. That is a positive and respectful approach, but it is unfortunate to see other politicians trying to rush meaningful work that we negotiated for 2 years to set up.

With respect to the general misinformation about the Ring of Fire area and timelines for projects, Chief Atlookan mentioned, “I must also say that so much about this area is still unknown and mineral development hype has been rampant for more than a decade. If there were shared decision-making arrangements in place with our First Nations, then you’d see an appropriate excitement about the region from the market. Companies know they need our support before anything happens. The crown governments talk about consultation delays, but have yet to really work with us on deep partnerships to plan the future of the region together. If they were serious about encouraging development, they would listen to our people and understand that in 1905 we agreed to share. That means sharing in the beauty, continued enjoyment of our culture and livelihoods, while sharing in any decisions about future changes, and the shared prosperity of our homelands. Sharing never meant surrender.”

If there was ever a time for respectful collaboration, it is now. EFN must have a seat at the table in all future decisions that may affect our inherent Indigenous rights and Aboriginal and Treaty rights and interests – that is the bare minimum. EFN respects the positions taken by all of our neighbouring rights-holders and family in nearby First Nations. We expect to hear back from Premier Ford and Prime Minister Carney shortly, and look forward to advocating for our community members’ shared vision of the future in our homelands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Solomon Atlookan', written over a horizontal line.

Chief Solomon Atlookan and Eabametoong First Nation Council