

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 9, 2018

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**MEDIA RELEASE: Petition to Niagara Regional Police Service to Move Short Hills  
Barricade Surpasses 1,300 Signatures in Treaty Recognition Week**

ST. CATHARINES, ON – An online petition launched by the Supporters of Haudenosaunee Right to Hunt asking the Niagara Regional Police Service to move the illegal barricade stalling Haudenosaunee hunters at the Short Hills Provincial Park entrance surpassed 1,300 signatures during Ontario’s Treaties Recognition Week. The petition can be found at <https://www.change.org/p/honour-the-treaties-stop-the-barricade-at-short-hills>.

The petition calls on the police to move the anti-hunt protesters to the side of the road which preserves their opportunity to be seen and heard while not violating the Treaties, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and as well as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Ontario Government’s web page on Treaties Recognition Week, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/treaties>, explains “Though they were signed more than a century ago, treaty commitments are just as valid today as they were then. Every Ontarian is a treaty person,” and that “Treaty rights are the specific rights of First Nations embodied in the treaties they entered into with the British government and then, Canada. These rights often address the creation of reserves for the exclusive use of First Nations, and their rights to hunt, fish, and trap on provincial Crown lands. Treaty rights are protected by subsection 35(1) of the Constitution Act, 1982.”

St. Catharines Mayor Walter Sendzik commented on Treaties Recognition Week on his mayoral web site, <http://mayorsendzik.ca/treaties-recognition-week/>, on November 6, 2018, stating “Treaties are legally binding agreements between First Nations and the federal and provincial governments. Treaties set out rights, responsibilities and relationships. Although cities did not sign treaties, we understand that cities also have responsibilities for truth and reconciliation with First Nations.” Mayor Sendzik added in his web post, “Reach out to a Native Friendship Centre and I’m sure you will learn something meaningful about the contributions of First Nations communities to Niagara. I know I have learned a lot on this journey and look forward to many more teachings.”

Jennifer Dockstader, Oneida Nation, Bear Clan, Haudenosaunee, Executive Director of the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre, said “It is especially important during Ontario’s Treaties Recognition Week, and at all times, for governments and people to respect and recognize the Treaties, which includes not interfering with them or allowing anyone to interfere with our rights.”

Celeste Smith, Oneida Nation, Wolf Clan, Haudenosaunee, co-founder of the Supporters of Haudenosaunee Right to Hunt, explained “The Niagara Regional Police Service and the Ontario Provincial Police are supposed to enforce the law, not be complicit in the illegal barricade. The barricade stalls hunters as they enter and leave the Short Hills which violates their Indigenous rights. The police have a legal obligation to protect our Inherent and Treaty rights.”

Supporters of Haudenosaunee Right to Hunt was founded in 2014 and supports Indigenous Inherent and Treaty Rights. They have organized educational workshops to increase awareness in Niagara of these issues. A full schedule is available at <https://sixnationsrighttohunt.com/workshops-events/>. The Haudenosaunee Wildlife and Habitat Authority, which organizes the hunt, is a department tasked by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council with the management of wildlife resources. This year is the fifth year of Haudenosaunee harvesting at Short Hills Provincial Park and is the third year for Ontario’s Treaties Recognition Week.