

Ministre des Affaires indiennes et
du Nord canadien et interlocuteur fédéral
auprès des Métis et des Indiens non inscrits



Minister of Indian Affairs and
Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor
for Métis and Non-Status Indians

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H4

SEP 20 2006

Mr. Mitch Gold
Organizer
First Nations Indigenous Trust
2 Bloor Street West, Suite 100-209
TORONTO ON M4W 3E2

Dear Mr. Gold:

This is in response to the package received on June 30, 2006, at the Ontario regional office of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and forwarded to my attention, with letters addressed to me dated June 29, and June 30, 2006, and other enclosures, regarding the protest at the Douglas Creek Estates, the 1805 Toronto Purchase and other matters, and to your correspondence of July 10, 2006, regarding the administration of the Toronto Islands.

Regarding negotiations between the Government of Canada and the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation on the 1805 Toronto Purchase specific claim, the Toronto Purchase claim is based on an outstanding lawful obligation owed to the descendants of the signatories to the 1805 Toronto Purchase agreement, the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. The claim relates to the specific terms of the 1805 agreement. If members represented by the First Nations Indigenous Trust were signatories to the 1805 agreement, evidence supporting your claim should be submitted to the Specific Claims Branch of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

As for your concerns with the Douglas Creek Estates protest, Canada continues to be engaged in discussions with the Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation, the Province of Ontario, neighbouring municipalities, local business leaders, and other interested parties to resolve the Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation's land-based grievances. All interested parties are seeking a long-term and peaceful resolution through ongoing negotiations. I have appointed the Honourable Barbara McDougall, assisted by senior negotiator Dr. Ronald Doering, to act on my behalf as the federal representatives in ongoing discussions. We will continue to work together in a manner that respects the laws of Canada and that does not harm third parties.

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Canada

Good progress continues to be made at the negotiations and a positive relationship between the parties has been established. In addition to regular Main Table meetings, side tables have been created for further discussion on specific matters and to help speed resolution of certain priorities.

Though the complexity of the situation has not allowed for as expedient a resolution as desired, we are doing what is reasonably possible. The Six Nations' lawsuit involves allegations of breaches of fiduciary duty in the administration of Six Nations' lands and assets. The claims focus on how land and money were managed as opposed to ownership and a return of lands. Resolution of this complex matter requires extensive research of tens of thousands of pages of documents and arriving at a common understanding of historical facts. An exploratory resolution process was commenced in 2004 to discuss whether settlement was possible of any or all of the claims raised in litigation by the Six Nations of the Grand River. These discussions are now focused on the Douglas Creek Estates and related issues.

For now, the Douglas Creek Estates land will be held in trust by the Province until the issues of ownership and use are determined. The original development plan will not proceed and the future use of the property will be decided at the main negotiation table with consideration of all affected communities' interests.

I intend to take steps to retool the claims process, to ensure that it works better. Before my election to Parliament, I had the honour of serving for 15 years on the Indian Claims Commission, and know first hand the difficulties caused by the slow pace of claims. There are many areas in which the processes can be improved, and the Department has been instructed to address those issues with the aim of streamlining the process.

In all cases, the Government of Canada supports a negotiated settlement in accordance with its goals of achieving justice, respect, and reconciliation in these matters. Negotiated settlements are not only about coming to terms with the past, but also about building a better future. I assure you that we are working to achieve a settlement that will bring increased harmony between the two communities. The Government of Canada intends to set objectives that can be accomplished and show tangible, measurable results as quickly as possible. I have every confidence that Mrs. McDougall will work with the Province, Six Nations representatives, and other interested parties, to develop a plan for addressing and resolving issues related to the Six Nations' land-based grievances and governance. I recognize that any resolution will require a great deal of patience, understanding, respect, and creativity in order to achieve a satisfactory and long-lasting outcome.

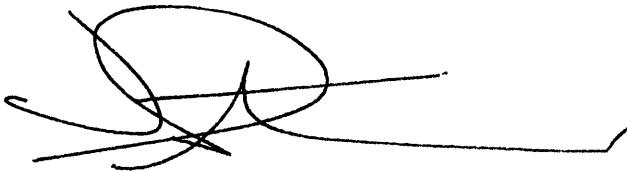
Your concerns with the management of the Toronto Islands does not fall within the mandate of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. I note that you have already contacted the City of Toronto regarding some of your concerns. The Toronto Port Authority falls under the mandate of Transport Canada. If you have not already done so, you may wish to contact my colleague, the Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, at:

House of Commons
OTTAWA ON K1A 0A6

Facsimile: (613) 993-0327

I trust that this information is of assistance to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jim Prentice', written over a horizontal line.

The Honourable Jim Prentice, PC, QC, MP