

The Premier  
of Ontario

Legislative Building  
Queen's Park  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1A1

Le Premier ministre  
de l'Ontario

Édifice de l'Assemblée législative  
Queen's Park  
Toronto (Ontario)  
M7A 1A1



April 29, 2008

Ms. Margaret Atwood and Colleagues  
c/o Wildlands League  
380-401 Richmond Street West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5V 3A8

Dear Ms. Atwood and Colleagues:

Thank you for writing to me regarding the incarceration of six members of the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) First Nation and Robert Lovelace of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation. I appreciate your bringing your concerns to my attention, and I welcome the opportunity to respond.

I would first like to say that I am both heartened and encouraged to see citizens of your stature and achievement investing time and energy in expressing support for the betterment of Ontario's Aboriginal communities and in bringing to the fore your perspective on Aboriginal issues in Ontario and in Canada. I recognize that, for too long, governments missed the opportunity to pursue strong and positive relationships with First Nations. That is why our government has taken steps to change that state of affairs. And we have done that by, among other initiatives, creating a new stand-alone ministry dedicated to supporting Ontario's Aboriginal communities, implementing the recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry, signing an almost \$3 billion gaming revenue-sharing agreement with First Nations and investing in Aboriginal health and wellness. As Premier of Ontario, and on behalf of the people of this province, I was tremendously proud to give the Kelowna Accord my full and unequivocal support. I am disappointed that the federal government has chosen to abandon that accord, yet our government remains committed to working with Aboriginal communities to ensure that Prime Minister Harper follows through on the commitments made by the Government of Canada.

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I wish to reassure you that our government opposed the incarceration of KI First Nation leaders in court and has since supported an expedited appeal. Our government has always strongly favoured negotiation over litigation and we worked very hard, in co-operation with the KI Chief and Council, to avoid the latter outcome. In keeping with our demonstrated preference to seek peaceful resolution through dialogue, the Honourable Michael Bryant, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, visited the KI First Nation three times since the beginning of this year to consult with leaders and the community. Minister Bryant remains firmly committed to working hard, on the ground, to help settle this dispute.

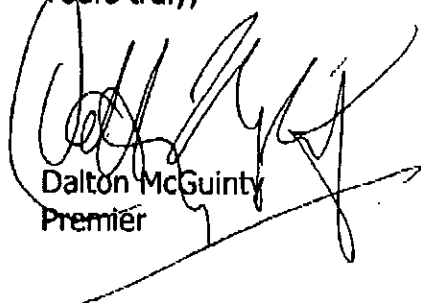
I also wish to reaffirm that my colleagues and I are fully cognizant of our duty to consult with regard to the Frontenac exploration and other mining issues within the Algonquin land-claim area. To this end, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs provided \$100,000 to the Algonquins of Ontario to help establish an office to assist them with consultations with the province.

We have committed to reviewing the *Mining Act*, and work is already underway. We need to modernize the act so that it is in keeping with our values and expectations at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century while ensuring that Ontario remains one of the best places in the world to do business and respects the principles of sustainable economic development.

As I am sure you know, the determination to incarcerate the KI First Nation leaders and Mr. Lovelace was made by the courts. As the courts and judiciary operate independently of government, the province has no authority over verdicts or sentences.

Thank you again for sharing your views on issues that our government takes extremely seriously. Please accept my best wishes.

Yours truly,



Dalton McGuinty  
Premier