

Director Hollowell: “Sovereignty and governance”



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Graymont

As I write this unit report, its been 74 days and counting since Director Creagh of the DNR made the decision to approve a purchase proposal from Graymont mining company of Canada. Our tribe is opposed to the sale. The sale is an assault to

our sovereignty as a tribal nation far beyond the actual loss of acreage. No public word has been issued by the chairman since the sale was approved. This is a very poor time for the chairman to go silent. He alone is empowered to speak “on behalf of the tribe as a whole” to its citizens and to other sovereign entities. The governing body has given him ‘room to lead.’ It is his duty to inform the tribal membership about important sovereign government matters.

Belfy v Creah

Meanwhile — this is a federal court case in the public domain (West District MI). The following comments are my own: A handful of individuals have filed a “motion for a temporary restraining order” enjoining the State of Michigan from approving the sale of state lands to

Graymont based on their inherent rights under the 1836 Treaty and the 2007 Consent Decree. This effort may be well intentioned, but it’s surely ill-conceived and has resulted in the judge allowing submittal of briefs — giving the State of Michigan AND Graymont the opportunity to submit their “2 cents” in matters of our sovereign rights! Who are these self-appointed people who would rush to the steps of the courthouse willy-nilly and unprepared (the main plaintiff is not even a tribal citizen of the 1836 treaty). How ironic is it that those who claim to be protecting Anishnaabe inherent rights would run first to the courts for relief and fail to give their own tribal government notice (or if they did, the tribal governing body was not informed. I first learned of the court case on Facebook!). These

folks, no matter how virtuous their intentions, are not accountable to you, the citizens of this tribe. Nor are they accountable to tribal citizens of other 1836 treaty tribes. The chairman needs to address this publically to lend assurance and clarity for the people.

April issue of Win Awenen Nisitotung (tribal newspaper)

A front-page article in the tribal newspaper talks about the above court case. I’ve heard from a number of members about the news article. I’m not sure who authored this piece or whose statement is cited. But I am concerned that language in the news article has led some readers to believe that our tribe signed on to Belfy v Creagh. That belief would be incorrect. The Sault Tribe has NOT signed on to this case.

Taking the above mentioned concerns in whole (silence from the chairman, the lawsuit and the easily misread article on the front page of the newspaper) it’s hard not to conclude an element of political orchestration and manipulation going on here. Playing politics with our sovereignty is unacceptable.