

Public statement

1 September 2009

No logging at Grassy Narrows without community consent

As organizations promoting social justice, environmental protection and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, we are calling on the Government of Ontario to make an immediate, public commitment that there will be no logging in the traditional territory of the Grassy Narrows First Nation without the consent of the community.

Grassy Narrows is trying to rebuild an economy and way of life that have been devastated by decades of severe environmental contamination and destruction. The people of Grassy Narrows have already made it clear that large-scale, clear-cut logging is incompatible with their vision for the preservation and use of their territory.

Ongoing forest management talks between the province and community are expected to take years to conclude. The provincial government however has never made any commitment to suspend logging while these talks proceed. Now the Ministry of Natural Resources has brought forward a new logging plan that includes provisions for potential resumption of large-scale clear cutting in the traditional territory.

Our organizations strongly believe that Ontario should be making every effort to address the wrongs of the past and ensure that the rights of the people of Grassy Narrows are at long last respected and upheld. We are deeply troubled by the possibility that an outdated, business as usual approach to forest management may be taking priority over the inherent and constitutional entrenched rights of Indigenous peoples.

Over the past year, a number of industry leaders have recognized that the rights of the people of Grassy Narrows cannot be ignored. In March 2008, Boise Inc, announced that it would not buy pulp from wood logged without the consent of the Grassy Narrows people. This June, the ethical investment firm Calvert divested from the Weyerhaeuser forestry company over that company's refusal to adopt a similar sourcing requirement. Ontario should follow this example and publicly commit not to license any logging in the traditional territory of the Grassy Narrows First Nation without the consent of the community. Protection of the community's rights must be a priority in future forest management decisions. Our organizations are calling on Weyerhaeuser and other companies to also publicly commit not to log or use wood from Grassy Narrows Territory without the consent of the community.

Signed,

Amnesty International Canada
AW@L
Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers)
Chiefs of Ontario
Christian Peacemaker Teams Canada
The Council of Canadians
CUPE 3903 First Nations Solidarity Working Group
Dogwood Initiative
Earth Justice Initiative
Earthroots
ForestEthics
Greenpeace Canada
Green Press Initiative
Greenspiration
Indigenous Environmental Network
KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives
MiningWatch
Canada Rainforest Action Network
Rising Tide North America
Sierra Youth Coalition
Wildlands League