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The Mississaugas of Scugog First Nation - Declaration of a State of Emergency during the COVID19 pandemic crisis

Effective Saturday, April 4, 2020, the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation Council has declared a State of Emergency to support the First Nation's ability to respond to COVID-19.

The decision to declare an emergency is to acknowledge that there are increasing cases of COVID19 within the Region of Durham and Township of Scugog, which presents a significantly heightened risk to our First Nation. Furthermore, we have decided to declare a State of Emergency to communicate to our community how serious the COVID19 situation is, and emphasize the requirement for members to practice social distancing measures. Council directs that members and residents within the MSIFN territory to socially isolate themselves, and have no gatherings of people beyond those residents within the home.

The declaration of a State of Emergency reaffirms the emergency decision-making powers to the MSIFN Council. That said, our Pandemic Planning Committee shall carry forward as a team making decisions on all emergency and precautionary measures. The Committee will operate through the Council under the authority established in the MSIFN Land Code and our emergency plan.

A declaration of emergency allows the Council to delegate its authority to the First Nation Manager & Pandemic Committee to make decisions, approve purchases, and direct necessary operational changes to protect residents should that become a clear and present need of the Council. This will be done on a temporary basis only in the event that the Council becomes incapacitated through the COVID19 virus. None of the Council or our members have any known cases of COVID19. The Pandemic Committee will continue to work closely with public health authorities and health care professionals to provide a fulsome response to this emergency.

MSIFN members and residents have the duty to reinforce the importance of self-isolation, staying at home, limiting visits into town to trips of absolute necessity, and to adhere to physical distancing by maintaining a 2 metre (6 foot) space between yourself and the next person. MSIFN has already closed our park, our recreational amenities, and our community events and programming. Aboriginal Day and the MSIFN Pow Wow celebrations are also canceled. We will make preparations for a community gathering and celebration once the COVID19 crisis ends. Until then, MSIFN members and residents must adhere to the Health Canada and Pandemic Planning Committee precautionary measures to keep the community safe.

Members are asked to support our front-line workers, and the support of the Pandemic Planning Committee is critical if we are to have solidarity as a community and weather the storm of the COVID19 crisis. Please be patient and be understanding in that we are working as hard as we can to serve the needs of our members & families and other residents of the territory.

Please be reminded that all public buildings are closed to the public with the exception of our Pandemic Planning Committee and our essential services staff. MSIFN businesses will remain open as essential services to the community, but with restricted hours and strict adherence to Health Canada COVID19 safety measures. A full fire burn ban is in effect in the MSIFN territory and beyond, and no burn permits will be issued. Our park is closed and we urge people to socially distance if you are walking in and around the territory.

Members are permitted to have walk-through access of open green spaces as long as a minimum physical distance of 2 metres (6 feet) is maintained. Violation of this order, tampering or removal of signs and caution tape may result in a hefty fine.

Scugog Township Emergency and Fire Services will continue to operate as usual to support our community. The Council and Pandemic Planning Committee will continue to provide services to residents via telephone & email and in-person, wherever required. All elder and vulnerable members will be serviced by our Health Team in the usual course.

Any updates on MSIFN's response to COVID-19 will be communicated online through the MSIFN Members' Portal and through email. To get onto the MSIFN email list, please message Council EA Cathy Richards at: crichards@scugogfirstnation.com.

We urge members to please contact the Council in the event of issues of community or personal concern. We wish you and your families well. May the Creator see us all through to the other side of this pandemic crisis, keeping us all healthy and connected.

Please stay home, and stay safe!

Miigwech, and Baamaapii!

Chief Kelly LaRocca
Councillor Jamie Coons
Councillor Laura Colwell

April 4, 2020