



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First Nation Gives Unanimous Support to Historic Provincial Agreement

July 20, 2016 – In an extraordinary, unanimous show of First Nation membership support last night, the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation (MSIFN) ratified a historic agreement with Ontario. “We are very excited about what this agreement means for our community’s future, and the Council is thankful to our community for giving this agreement their unanimous support,” said Chief Kelly LaRocca of MSIFN.

The vote comes after two years of negotiations with Ontario by the Chief and Council of MSIFN to reach an agreement on the future of Great Blue Heron Charity Casino (GBH). Dozens of meetings with government officials – and consultations with MSIFN members across Canada – were part of this important process.

Since 1997, Great Blue Heron Charity Casino has played a vital role in the MSIFN community, and the region as a whole. The casino is the largest employer in North Durham – responsible for almost 3000 direct and indirect jobs – and contributes \$236 million annually to the local economy.

“MSIFN’s council take seriously our role in the community, and we look forward to working with local partners in the years ahead,” said Chief LaRocca. “We also want to stress that GBH continues to be open for business, and we look forward to working with OLG and its new operator in building a vibrant hub of economic activity at Scugog First Nation.”

This agreement marks a significant financial milestone for MSIFN and the Province. The dedication and leadership of Premier Kathleen Wynne, along with the efforts of her senior staff, demonstrate her government’s commitment to Indigenous communities.

Under the new agreement, GBH will now be a part of the gaming modernization efforts underway at OLG. The First Nation has also secured a promising financial future for their people, which will allow MSIFN to continue its work as community leaders locally and in the North Durham region.

In her letter to Premier Wynne certifying the ratification vote, Chief LaRocca said “With a participation rate of 54 percent of eligible voters, we are pleased to report that we achieved unanimous member support for this agreement.”

The MSIFN have been proudly running the GBH Charity Casino for close to two decades. The GBH Charity Casino was financed, built and developed by the MSIFN following a First Nation-Crown Agreement with Ontario, signed in 1993.

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For media inquiries:
Lisa Kinsella
Daisy Group
lisa@daisygroup.ca