
Assembly of First Nations

50 O'Connor Street, Suite 200
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L2
Telephone: (613) 241-6789 Fax: (613) 241-5808
www.afn.ca



Assemblée des Premières Nations

50, rue O'Connor, Suite 200
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L2
Téléphone: (613) 241-6789 Télécopieur: (613) 241-5808
www.afn.ca

ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
July 9, 10, 11, 2024, Montreal, QC

Resolution no. 32/2024

TITLE: Protection of Drinking Water for Anishinaabe

SUBJECT: Health, Environment

MOVED BY: Chief Jeff Copenace, Ojibways of Onigaming, ON

SECONDED BY: Kimberly Sue Detweiler, Proxy, Rainy River First Nation, ON

DECISION Carried by consensus.

WHEREAS:

A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) states:

- i. Article 25: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.
- ii. Article 26(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories, and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied, or otherwise used or acquired.
- iii. Article 32(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.
- iv. Article 32(2): States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.
- v. Article 32(3): States shall provide effective mechanisms for just and fair redress for any such activities, and appropriate measures shall be taken to mitigate adverse environmental, economic, social, cultural or spiritual impact.

B. The Ojibways of Onigaming make our home between Kakagi Lake/Crow Lake and Lake of the Woods in Treaty #3 territory, based in northwestern Ontario.

Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 11th day of July, 2024 in Montreal, Quebec

Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

32 – 2024
Page 1 of 3

- C. Currently, Kakagi Lake/Crow Lake and the interconnected sacred, spring-fed lakes provide some of the most pristine, clean water on Turtle Island (in North America). Kakagi Lake/Crow Lake also provides the drinking water for Onigaming families.
- D. The Critical Mineral Strategies of Ontario and Canada, along with the de-regulation of environmental protections, has put these sacred, spring-fed lakes at risk of destruction & poisoning by Canadian and foreign industry.
- E. The Ojibways of Onigaming remain in a state of emergency, with thirty-nine deaths in our families in the past three years—most deaths completely preventable. As such, Onigaming finds itself unable to participate in any consultation or accommodation processes with industry in good faith. Provincial and federal governments have shown very little compassion for our constant loss of life, as industry races forward on our home-waters.
- F. Kakagi Lake/Crow Lake, Cameron Lake, Cedar Tree Lake, Berry Lake, Flint Lake, Dogpaw Lake are all interconnected, spring-fed lakes that the Anishinaabe view as sacred. They are some of the cleanest, most beautiful lakes on Turtle Island (in North America). All these lakes are currently under mining claims and threat of destruction by Canadian industry and foreign industry. These lakes are not only our drinking water source, but these lakes represent the Anishinaabe history and way of life.
- G. The Ojibways of Onigaming already suffer environmental damage from a large gold mine just 40 kms south of us. Our families are finding sickness and cancers that we never experienced before, and the rates of cancer in nearby municipalities are also higher than average. We are concerned about future mines and cumulative health impacts to our children and families, especially if further mines are developed around us, which currently Canada and Ontario are promoting.
- H. The Ojibways of Onigaming are in desperate need of help from other First Nations and First Nations organizations to protect our homelands, drinking waters, Treaty Rights and Anishinaabe way of life, which are all under threat. We are begging for help. We believe that the spring-fed lakes & water will be of far greater value than gold or other minerals in the next hundred years and beyond.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the First Nations-in-Assembly:

1. Support the Ojibways of Onigaming in their call for a moratorium on all exploration and mining activities, including clear-cutting for aggregate, in their traditional territories until their State of Emergency is lifted and they can engage in good faith.
2. Support the Ojibways of Onigaming in calling on all local First Nations to work with the Ojibways of Onigaming to prevent the advancement of any further destructive exploration and mining near Kakagi Lake/Crow Lake and the interconnected sacred, spring-fed lakes.
3. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to advocate to the Government of Canada and the Ontario Government for the full protection and conservation of the sacred, inter-connected lakes in the traditional territories of the Ojibways of Onigaming, in order to protect the families, children, and all future generations of the Ojibways of Onigaming.

Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 11th day of July, 2024 in Montreal, Quebec

Cindy Woodhouse

4. Direct the National Chief to write to the Prime Minister and the Premier of Ontario to explore protection and conservation measures to protect Kakagi Lake/Crow Lake and the interconnected sacred spring-fed lakes for future generations of the Ojibways of Onigaming.
5. Call on all First Nations to fully consider the environmental and health impacts of economic development, including in the transportation and disposal of nuclear waste, on other First Nations in their decision-making processes and to engage with these impacted First Nations.

Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 11th day of July, 2024 in Montreal, Quebec

Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

32 – 2024
Page 3 of 3