



CHIEF DELBERT RILEY
HEREDITARY CRANE CLAN CHIEF, CHIPPEWA NATION



To: Mayor of Ottawa <Mark.Sutcliffe@ottawa.ca>
Cc: City of Ottawa Councillors <Matt.Luloff@ottawa.ca>, <Laura.Dudas@ottawa.ca>, <David.Hill@ottawa.ca>, <Cathy.Curry@ottawa.ca>, <Clarke.Kelly@ottawa.ca>, <Glen.Gower@ottawa.ca>, <BayWard@ottawa.ca>, <Collegeward@ottawa.ca>, <knoxdalemerivale@ottawa.ca>, <Jessica.Bradley@ottawa.ca>, <Tim.Tierney@ottawa.ca>, <stephanie.plante@ottawa.ca>, <rideaurockcliffeward@ottawa.ca>, <Ariel.Troster@ottawa.ca>, <Jeff.Leiper@ottawa.ca>, <Riley.Brockington@ottawa.ca>, <capitalward@ottawa.ca>, <Marty.Carr@ottawa.ca>, <Catherine.Kitts@ottawa.ca>, <George.Darouze@ottawa.ca>, <Ward21@ottawa.ca>, <Steve.Desroches@ottawa.ca>, <Allan.Hubley@ottawa.ca>, <Wilson.Lo@ottawa.ca>, The Governor General of Canada Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon <info@gg.ca>, Minister of Crown–Indigenous Relations Marc Miller <Marc.Miller@parl.gc.ca>

April 20th, 2023

Dear Mayor [Mark Sutcliffe](mailto:Mark.Sutcliffe@ottawa.ca) and Ottawa City Council Members,

Aniin. My name is Chief Del Riley. I am a Hereditary Crane Clan Chief of the Chippewa Nation, a former elected Chief of the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, a former Land Claims Director and President of the Union of Ontario Indians, and the last President of the National Indian Brotherhood (the forerunner to the Assembly of First Nations, which I helped to found). Among my many achievements as President of the National Indian Brotherhood was the development and negotiation of Sections 25 and 35 of the Canadian Constitution, which enshrine the protection of Aboriginal and treaty rights into Canadian law.

I am writing to you on behalf of Mr. Anthony Tenasco, an Anishinaabe Algonquin who is registered by Canada as an Indian belonging to Reserve #73 – Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg. Mr. Tenasco is passionate about the healing properties of cannabis and the rights of his people to their unceded lands. He is working with one of the most health and safety conscious Indigenous brands in Canada, [Medicine Wheel Natural Healing](#) to open a medicinal cannabis trading post on the unceded traditional lands of his people at 196 Beechwood Ave., Vanier, Ottawa.

Mr. Tenasco has the support of his family and the local land owner in the operation of his business. Medicine Wheel operates in accordance with the protocols of the Indigenous [Red Feather Certification](#) system which meet or exceed the health and safety requirements of Health Canada for cannabis. In providing medicine to those in need, and in establishing a business on his peoples unceded land, Mr. Tenasco is asserting his constitutionally protected Section 25 and 35 Aboriginal and treaty rights.

I appreciate that the City of Ottawa's [policy on Indigenous relations](#) recognizes that



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“Ottawa is built on un-ceded Anishinabe Algonquin territory” and that “The City of Ottawa honours the peoples and land of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation.” I trust that you will extend the honour and recognition spoken of in your policies to Mr. Tenasco and Medicine Wheel Natural Healing. I am glad that you recognize that the City of Ottawa lies upon the lands of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation, which as Chief Dylan Whiteduck reminds us, have never been ceded “through treaty or any other means” and are currently the subject of an Aboriginal title claim by the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg that was filed in 2016 and recently renewed in December of 2022.

As you may be aware, in the time since Canada legalized cannabis in 2018, hundreds of sovereign Indigenous cannabis trading posts have opened up across Turtle Island. These shops operate on unceded Indigenous lands in accordance with Indigenous customs and conventions regarding trade and medicine, and they are not regulated by Federal, Provincial, or the racist *Indian Act* Band Council systems. One website [shows a listing of over 475 such sovereign shops](#), and I am sure that there are many more stores which have not yet made it onto the map. The existence of these shops is a reflection of the continuation of Aboriginal and treaty rights in the modern era. These businesses are a constitutionally protected and community supported part of the Indigenous economy.

Beginning in 2022, Indigenous cannabis shops began to operate on unceded Indigenous lands off-reserve. Members of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Mohawk Nation have now opened over a dozen sovereign cannabis trading posts in downtown Toronto. Members of the Chippewa Nation and the Oneida Nation have similarly opened up shops in downtown London, Ontario. Members of the Micmac Nation are also opening shops on their unceded lands in Halifax and Moncton. After over a year of operation in Toronto, none of the Indigenous shops in the city have been raided, and they have made a positive contribution to the city, to Indigenous entrepreneurship, and towards reconciliation with Canada. I am hopeful these shops point towards a new era of economic reconciliation and that the days of Canada’s economic genocide towards Indigenous people are drawing to a close.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter, I am willing to meet with you and to explain to you in detail how constitutionally protected Aboriginal and treaty rights apply in this matter. To arrange a meeting, you may contact me at 613-714-0222 or via email at delbertrileyc@gmail.com.

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Chief Del Riley

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