

Notice to Media:

Embargoed until 10 am, November 9, 2016

Media Conference at 10 am on November 9th: Council Chambers, Band Office, Elsipogtog First Nation

Elsipogtog First Nation's lawyer Bruce McIvor will be present at this media conference.

ELSIPOGTOG FILES ABORIGINAL TITLE CLAIM FOR MI'KMAQ TERRITORY IN NEW BRUNSWICK

On **November 9, 2016** Elsipogtog First Nation is filing a claim on behalf of the Mi'kmaq Nation for Aboriginal title to the Mi'kma'ki district of Sikniktuk in New Brunswick.

"This claim is about protecting our lands and waters for our children and our future generations," said Elsipogtog Chief Arren Sock. "We cannot stand by while the government ignores us and makes decisions that threaten the traditional lands of the Mi'kmaq people. It's time for us to exercise our rights and responsibilities to protect our territory."

The Mi'kmaq, including Elsipogtog's ancestors, signed treaties of peace and friendship with the British Crown in the 1760s. The treaties did not include the surrender of Mi'kmaq title to their lands. In the claim Elsipogtog asks the Court to confirm that the Mi'kmaq Nation continues to hold Aboriginal title and rights in Sikniktuk, and to order injunctions preventing the further destruction of the land, water, air and forest.

"We want to offer hope and strength to our youth by taking a stand to protect Mi'kmaq title and rights," said Kenneth Francis, speaker for Kopit Lodge, which represents Elsipogtog on resource development matters. "The federal government has promised a renewed relationship with Indigenous peoples based on partnership and respect and which is consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Unfortunately, we still see Canada and the Province disregarding our rights and making decisions that threaten the health of our people and our lands. By filing this claim we are asking both levels of government to step up and take our rights seriously."

The claim comes at a time when both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in New Brunswick have repeatedly raised concerns about government decisions pertaining to the lands and waters in Mi'kmaq territory.

"Elsipogtog intends to continue to work with our Indigenous neighbours and our Canadian allies to ensure the protection of the lands and waters that sustain us," said Chief Sock. "As part of the Mi'kmaq Nation we have a responsibility to act as stewards of our territory. Reasserting our right to make decisions about our lands and waters is an essential part of safeguarding Sikniktuk for all of our long-term benefit."

Media contacts:

Chief Arren Sock: 506-523-8705

Kenneth Francis, speaker, Kopit Lodge: 506-523-5823

Bruce McIvor, legal counsel: 604-785-0327