



Monday May 6, 2013

## To Members of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory:

As members of the Six Nations Farmers' Association (SNFA), this is SNFA's response to the request by the Hodenosaunee Development Institute (HDI) for a lease agreement with HDI on behalf of the Six Nations Hodenosaunee Confederacy.

We attended a meeting with other SNFA members in February 2013 at the Onondaga Longhouse. At this meeting, we requested a letter of support from the Chiefs to continue to farm the Burtch Farm land. From that meeting, we understood the instructions from the Chiefs to be that the SNFA were to continue farming Burtch as we had been doing in the fall of 2012 for another five years and continue to share proceeds with the community.

From the farming year of 2012, the SNFA shared \$15,000 with the community through fifteen community organizations. We retained the balance of the money generated to be used for the crop input costs for 2013. Based on the assumption that SNFA was farming the land in 2013, the land was prepared in September 2012, to plant a crop in the spring of 2013. Corn seed and other inputs have been purchased. Plus, soil testing has been conducted. Much time and energy has been put into this project. As well, \$50,000 has been committed to cover costs of planting a corn crop at Burtch in 2013.

After several discussions with the Confederacy Council, the Chiefs directed that the SNFA speak with HDI to make a lease agreement. However, since HDI was not installed by the usual process including the Clan Mothers and the people and is not representative of the whole community, the validity of their authority is questioned. Also, it appears that HDI's decision making process is very autocratic to the point of overriding and disrespecting the decision making powers and leadership of the Chiefs who are expected to rubber stamp HDI recommendations with very minimal presentation of information from HDI Staff. This process is very dangerous in that the community land dealings are in the hands of and benefitting a

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very few number of people, some not necessarily from this community with no accountability/transparency of funds involved. There is no opportunity to ask questions or dialogue on issues regarding different opinions. The question is what will be left as a future legacy for our children and grandchildren and the generations to come?

The SNFA will not, therefore, enter into an agreement with HDI. SNFA will however, honor the instructions given to them by the Confederacy Chiefs in February 2013 and will continue to farm the Burtch lands as per those instructions starting Monday May 6, 2013.

Sincerely,

Ralph Sowden - President  
Arthur Porter - Chief Administrative Officer  
Six Nations Farmers Association  
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