

Draft tobacco law clarifies Haudenosaunee ancestry

By Donna Duric
Writer

Any person who can trace his or her lineage back to Six Nations of the Grand River will be protected under the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council's (HCCC) new tobacco law.

The clarification came at a meeting held last Wednesday at Six Nations Polytechnic, where Haudenosaunee lawyer Kim Thomas explained that a person doesn't have to be "100 per cent Haudenosaunee" in order to be eligible for a license and protection under the new law that is currently being drafted.

She said the requirement that the local tobacco industry is "100 per cent Haudenosaunee-owned and operated" under the new law does not refer to a person's so-called "blood quantum."

"It doesn't mean you have to be 100 per cent Haudenosaunee by both your mom and your dad," said Thomas.

She said as long as the person can trace his or her ancestry back to Six Nations Grand River, he or she is protected under the new Haudenosaunee tobacco law.

Thomas said the reason for the stipulation is because there are non-natives profiting from the industry here on Six Nations.

Thomas represents the Haudenosaunee Trade Collective, (HTC) a group of local tobacco manufacturers at Six Nations.

The Confederacy council established the Haudenosaunee Trade Delegation, a committee made up of tobacco industry representatives and Confederacy Representatives, to oversee

the development of a tobacco "law". A draft of that document is now being presented for community input.

The draft law is in response to Bill C-10.

Bill C-10, or the Tackling Contraband Tobacco Act, is a new federal law that carries minimum prison sentences for anyone caught trafficking in so-called "contraband tobacco" – that is, tobacco that is not licensed by the federal government.

The law has already received royal assent and could come into force at any time, said Thomas.

"Bill C-10 is seeking to regulate tobacco for our people and to criminalize our people that are involved in the tobacco industry," she said. "It's a threat to our economic rights and our security."

The HCCC has provided the



Haudenosaunee Confederacy legal adviser Aaron Detlor, one of two Confederacy appointees to the Trade Delegation explains the "law". (Photo by Donna Duric)

delegation with a terms of reference to come up with a draft tobacco law. The delegation is in the midst of its consultation process with the community on the draft law. The group is gathering feed-

back from a series of community meetings currently taking place and will tweak the draft law before bringing it back to the community again for further input in the next few weeks.

"This is by no means a done

deal," said Thomas. Kris Green, a Six Nations tobacco manufacturer and industry representative on the delegation, said the group wants as much feedback from the community as pos-

(Continued on page 4)