

# Bill C-10 could spark violence if it passes

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Writers

The controversial Bill C-10 amendment that cracks down on the transport of untaxed tobacco products, could spark a "powder keg" of violence across affected First Nations territories, says Bill Monture, Six Nations Men's Fire member.

But, Six Nations Elected Chief Ava Hill believes the violence will come at the hands of the police, not Six Nations people.

"I have been told by different individuals - both here at Six Nations and in the other Iroquois communities - that if this bill passes there could be violence in the event that the RCMP try to raid or charge anyone," she told the Turtle Island News.

"One community has already suggested that there be road closures/blockades and others have suggested that we have protests/rallies on Parliament Hill."

Hill would not say which community has called for road closures or blockades, but a non-native activist group bordering Six Nations has called for Six Nations to close roads and erect blockades to protest against the Tackling Contraband Tobacco Act, an amendment to the 2012 omnibus crime legislation, Bill C-10.

The legislation would amend the Criminal Code to add a charge of trafficking in "contraband" tobacco for anyone caught in possession of 10,000 cigarettes (or 50 cartons) or more.

Hill and members of the

Iroquois Caucus met with senators in Ottawa three weeks ago warning violence could erupt if the bill passes.

"At least she's making some kind of statement," said Monture. "It's like a powder keg waiting to explode. We don't know the end results," he said. "Somebody's going to die over this," he predicted.

He added: "Personally, I'm not going to let the RCMP or even the OPP run amuck and think they're doing this to our people. It's time we stand up... the problem with our people is we're too damn passive. That's just coming from me."

Chris Green, a local cigarette manufacturer, said she has heard from Six Nations people things could get violent, but it's not be-

cause Six Nations people are looking for trouble.

"It just goes back to protecting. People want to be able to protect themselves. It's not that they're looking for a violent situation. However they recognize that should their livelihoods be threatened, they'll protect themselves."

Green is part of an association of Six Nations manufacturers who have been meeting to strategize ways to fight the bill.

"We're still trying to get our heads around everything. It's bigger than us."

Elected Chief Hill said Six Nations may look at Kahnawake's draft tobacco regulations. Kahnawake is in the middle of its community decision making process (CDMP).

Kahnawake Chief Gina Deer said there have been

no talks of violence "So far no. People here have been working on the law and the regulations."

She said Kahnawake has not approached either Canada or Quebec on their draft law. "We're trying to get everything in order before we engage the government on that."

At Six Nations the Band Council laid out strategies to fight the bill at a community meeting last night that includes a marketing campaign, lobbying in Ottawa and gathering statistics.

Manufacturers want to see action. "We can't be reacting anymore," said Green. "We've got to get a little bit proactive."

She asked: "But how to be proactive when we're already reacting?"

"If we have an opportu-

nity to stop (Bill C-10) we should; we shouldn't ignore that. But at the same time, knowing it's a majority government, knowing they have the opportunity to push things through, we need to be prepared for that obvious side of things."

Some estimates say the industry has created roughly 2,000 jobs.

"That's just the tobacco industry itself," said councillor Helen Miller. "That's not the spin off ones that everybody's doing and then they spend their money here; they spend it at our stores. If they (the police) do shut everything down, that's the end of our economy pretty much."

Bill C-10 is not on the House of Commons agenda this week.