



ANISHINABEK NATION

COVID-19 Update - March 31, 2020

A message from Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Glen Hare:

We strongly urge our citizens to stay home. The seriousness of the coronavirus disease continues to grow. We need to listen to the recommendations from health professionals and that means to stay home. Our frontline workers are doing what they can to keep us all safe— we need to do our part to help. The next few weeks are critical to try to control and minimize the spreading of the virus. This means that social/physical distancing is paramount now more than ever. Our families are far too important to take any chances!

Indigenous

- In response to questions about workers on the TMX pipeline who are concerned about their safety, Trudeau said the government knows that indigenous communities are especially vulnerable and that he is taking extra measures to make sure the virus does not spread to those communities.
- B.C. First Nations leaders are urging the province to halt construction on the Coastal GasLink pipeline in light of COVID-19 health and safety concerns. This was expressed in an open letter written by the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs issued on Monday.
- Reservists and Canadian Rangers — the Indigenous force that patrols remote northern regions — will be brought into full-time service as part of the Armed Forces' COVID-19 response plan.
- The government of the Northwest Territories says it will help Indigenous families who want to head out on the land as an alternative to physical distancing. The N.W.T. will administer a \$2.6 million grant to help families buy the proper gear and supplies to head out to fishing and hunting camps.
- The program, supported by Indigenous governments, will help pay for wood, fuel, food, First Aid equipment, transportation and other suitable items.

Provincial

- Ontario has released new directives on health and safety standards for nurses to prevent exposure to COVID-19. The directive outlines precautions for interactions with suspected, presumed or confirmed carriers, point-of-care risk assessment, and training on use of personal protective equipment.
- Ontario has extended the provincial emergency declaration for another two weeks. This indicates the continued closure of non-essential workplaces and restrictions on social gatherings. In addition, Ontario is issuing a new emergency order to close all outdoor recreational amenities, effective immediately.
- Green spaces in parks, trails, ravines and conservation areas that aren't otherwise closed will remain open for walkthrough access, but individuals must practice physical distancing.



ANISHINABEK NATION

- Toronto is issuing fines of up to \$5 000 to people using prohibited amenities at parks.
- Public schools will remain closed until at least May 1st for teachers and May 4th for students.
- The second phase of the learn-at-home system will include enhancements that reinstitute student-teacher relationships and will require year-end report cards. This means that courses will be graded as opposed to pass/fail.
- Orders on electricity pricing, price gouging, and streamlining requirements for long-term care homes all remain in effect for the duration of this emergency declaration. Childcare centres will also stay closed for the next two weeks.
- Ontario will be temporarily deferring payments for the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) loans and making online learning supports, including year-end exams, available to postsecondary institutions. Loan repayment will be subject to a six-month interest-free moratorium until September 30th, 2020.
- Ontario is supporting Kids' Help Phone to increase the capacity to help students with any anxiety they may be experiencing regarding current uncertainties.
- Ontario has injected \$25 million of the 2019 fiscal budget into post-secondary institutions and to indigenous institutes. This funding was given directly to these institutions in order to address issues presented by the COVID-19 crisis. Use of funds will be up to each institution's president.
- The province has arranged a third-party vendor to guarantee that exams will be taken and graded with integrity. Ontario is covering the costs of this through the government, providing relief to our postsecondary institutions.
- Contrary to reports, Premier Ford has not sent any personal protective equipment to Quebec.
- When asked, Minister Lecce confirmed that school employees are ultimately under the instruction of school boards, meaning that decisions about continued payment of staff will be up to their respective boards.
- With rent due tomorrow for tenants across the province, Ford reassured the public that legislation is in place to stop evictions at this time.
- Ford urged truck stop locations to allow truckers to use their facilities, following an article released this morning indicating such issues.
- Ontario is developing an ethical framework in the instance that doctors need to prioritize cases due to equipment shortages, and Minister Elliott has said it will not be based on age.

Federal

- Ottawa has spoken to over 3000 companies in the last week who have reached out to help in the crisis. Ottawa has signed supply contracts with three Canadian companies for respirators, surgical masks and diagnostic materials, and has signed letters of intent with five other companies.
- The next step will be enabling companies to scale up testing capacity.



ANISHINABEK NATION

- The federal government is investing \$2 billion into purchasing personal protective equipment, including bulk orders for provinces and territories of test kits, swabs, and hand sanitizer.
- In response to questions about the continued pipeline construction on TMX, Trudeau said that all crown corporations are following the best medical advice.
- New emergency legislation passed last week by the federal government will increase Ottawa's ability to step in and purchase troubled assets from financial institutions, or other companies, if necessary. This legislation builds on measures put in place during the 2008 financial crisis.
- The union representing Canada Post employees is asking Canadians to disinfect their mailboxes to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Canada Post has also asked that Canadians with dogs keep their doors closed during deliveries. This follows confirmation that four Canadian postal workers have tested positive for the virus.

Allan Dokis
Director of Policy and Communications
allan.dokis@anishinabek.ca