



Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation

Press Release | State of Emergency declared, and all businesses ordered to close immediately in Pikwakanagan.

March 31, 2020

Tuesday, March 31, 2020, at a duly convened meeting of the Council of the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation (AOPFN), it was recommended by Pikwakanagan's Emergency Response Control Group (EMCG) for the COVID-19 Pandemic that: A State of Emergency be declared for Pikwakanagan. Effective immediately on Tuesday, March 31, 2020, I Wendy Jocko, Chief for the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation, declare a State of Emergency for Pikwakanagan.

This declaration of emergency activates the Pikwakanagan Emergency Response Plan.

This State of emergency was declared:

To ensure a proactive approach through the implementation of precautionary measures by the Council to protect community members.

1. To ensure timely access to outside funding and support.
2. To protect all members of the community, especially our most vulnerable.
3. To maintain essential services within the community
4. To ensure community members recognize the severity of the current risk to our community.

Secondly, the Council of the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation order that all businesses within the community, close effective immediately for an undetermined amount of time.

Below is an explanation of the context of this decision.

Together with the EMCG, AOPFN closed all non-essential services effective at 4:30 p. m. on Monday, March 16, 2020. All non-essential employees were to work from home; all essential employees and services were significantly reduced and placed on stand-by; vulnerable residents were identified and serviced; a food service program ramped up. Private businesses were highly encouraged to close or implement COVID-19 recommended precautions.

One of our Registered Nurses went to individual businesses or called them to discuss, counsel, and encourage the implementation of World Health Organization approved hygiene protocols in order to limit the risk of contamination to their staff, customers, and our residents. We were happy to see that most business owners were receptive and took the steps to close until March 31st.

Both Provincial and Federal governments have made the recommendation to restrict travel, including local travel (this means only leave your home to get essentials and do not interact with people outside of your household). Regardless of these and other announcements, we have witnessed a significant influx of

people in our community. This increase is deemed to drastically increase the risk of exposure to our members and our front-line workers. A significant number of our members have underlying health conditions (cancer, diabetes, respiratory problems, high blood pressure, etc.) which puts them at a higher risk of having serious complications from the virus, including death.

Motions have been passed to ensure the safety of Pikwakanagan with regards to non-member/non-resident traffic and to address the lack of social/physical distancing that has been implemented by some businesses and residents.

While other First Nation communities in Canada, including Ontario and Quebec, are setting-up control check-points, closing-down all together, or ordering the closures of all businesses, Pikwakanagan will continue to allow the through traffic provided business owners comply with the order to close immediately.

Chief and Council, along with the Emergency Control Group, will be communicating daily to ensure that the needs of the community are met, and the State of Emergency is lifted when it is safe to do so. This situation is constantly changing, and it should be expected that additional communications will be released frequently to ensure that the community remains safe and up-to-date on the evolving situation.

In conclusion, the fact remains that we can not prevent the virus from coming to our community, but if we all work together like our ancestors did, we can limit its spread and limit the impacts that we are faced with.

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