

## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Chiefs Concerned with Proposed Campground in Big Pond**

Yesterday the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) Council voted in favour of a zoning amendment needed for a RV Campground, on 40 hectares of land in Big Pond, N.S., to go ahead.

“We are disappointed by the council’s decision but we know that this is an initial step in a much larger process,” said Chief Leroy Denny, Eskasoni Mi’kmaq community. “We want the Council’s decision to now open the door for extensive engagement with local Mi’kmaq communities and with those who live around the proposed development area.”

While the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq Chiefs (Assembly) recognizes that this zoning amendment does not ‘approve’ the project, it does open the door for the project to potentially move forward.

“Our main concern is the protection of the Bras d’Or Lakes,” said Chief Wilbert Marshall, Potlotek Mi’kmaq community. “We want to ensure that a project this large will not cause any damage to the lakes because of the sewage, surface run-off and other water activities before any development begins.”

Although the duty to consult lies with the Crown, and municipalities do not have a legal responsibility to consult with First Nations, many have built relationships with their local Mi’kmaq communities, including the CBRM, so that they can work alongside one another in the best interests of everyone in their region.

“We have worked with Mayor Clarke and his Council on other files,” continued Chief Denny. “We are optimistic that we will be able to continue to work together as this proposed project moves through its various steps. We should all want to ensure that environmental protection is a key priority with any development that happens in our region.”

The Assembly has also reached out to Nova Scotia’s Minister of Environment, Iain Rankin, outlining a number of environmental concerns with this proposed development and the expectation that consultation will be initiated on any provincial permits that will be required.

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