



**Media Briefing – December 15 2025**

## **Indigenous Grassroots Seek to Intervene in Court Challenge of Ontario's Bill 5**

Two individual members from Attawapiskat First Nation, Ramon Kataquapit and Michel Koostachin, are [seeking to intervene](#) in an ongoing legal challenge by [nine First Nations](#) to Bill 5, the *Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act, 2025*. Represented by Legal Advocates for Nature's Defence (LAND) with the support of Ontario Nature, Kataquapit and Koostachin seek to join the case as "friends of the court" to impress upon the Court the urgency and immeasurable threat posed by Bill 5 and why it ought to be struck down as unconstitutional.

Both organizations and the interveners continue to call for the Ontario Government to repeal Bill 5.

Bill 5 – passed into law in June 2025 – allows Ontario to declare Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to fast-track developments, while exempting them from any provincial safeguards, including environmental and labour standards. It also allows project approvals without securing the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Peoples, whose lands, waters and cultural rights would be directly impacted.

### **The Intervenors**

Both interveners have section 35 Aboriginal and Treaty rights, deep land-based knowledge and lived experience with the cultural, ecological and spiritual consequences of resource development within Treaty 9 and in the Attawapiskat watershed.

[Ramon Kataquapit](#) is an Omushkego Cree youth leader from Attawapiskat First Nation. He is the founder of the Okiniwak Indigenous Youth Movement, inspired by the Seventh Fire prophecy and rooted in youth caretaking responsibilities. He is actively organizing youth and community members across Ontario to [respond to Bill 5](#) and is a member of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Oshkaatisak (Youth) Council, as well as the Chiefs of Ontario Youth Council.

[Michel Koostachin](#) is an Omushkego Cree knowledge keeper and community member of Attawapiskat First Nation. He is the founder of Friends of the Attawapiskat River, a grassroots movement protecting the vast Attawapiskat watershed in the so-called Ring of Fire region. Prior to the passage of Bill 5, Michel [provided testimony](#) to Ontario MPPs during committee hearings about the environmental and cultural impacts of industrial development in Treaty 9.

## **Interveners' Submission**

Koostachin and Kataquapit's intervention in court offers unique, community-based and youth-led perspectives. Their intervention focuses on three core points:

1. **Reconciliation and Indigenous Natural Law:** Reconciliation requires acknowledging Indigenous laws, responsibilities and the spirit and intent of Treaty 9 – particularly the duty to protect land and water for future generations.
2. **The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP):** With Canada a state party and signatory to UNDRIP, it must be meaningfully implemented at the provincial level, including the right to FPIC and associated protections for Indigenous Peoples as individual rights holders.
3. **Environmental Racism and Substantive Inequality:** Bill 5 perpetuates environmental racism by enabling harmful development in Indigenous homelands without necessary protections, violating their equality rights under section 15(1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

## **Why Their Participation Matters**

The interveners are among those who stand to be most directly and permanently affected by the impacts of Bill 5 on land, water, culture and community well-being. Their perspectives reflect grassroots voices, youth leadership and Indigenous Natural Law – views often missing despite being central to the impacts of the Bill 5. Targeted for a special economic zone under Bill 5, the so-called Ring of Fire region sits on one of the largest remaining intact peatlands on Earth - a globally significant carbon sink and refuge for biodiversity that has been stewarded by Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial.

## **What They Are Asking the Court**

Koostachin and Kataquapit are seeking the court's permission to intervene in the ongoing litigation filed by nine First Nations, file a legal argument, and speak at the hearing. They argue in favour of a declaration that Bill 5 is unconstitutional and seek an injunction or other court order prohibiting Ontario from taking any step involved in implementing the legislation. They are not seeking costs and ask the Court to hear directly from those whose rights and futures are at stake.