



**For Immediate Release
July 9, 2025**

Alderville First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation and the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation confirm the discovery of ancestral remains beneath a site under excavation for a proposed parking lot located at 1910 Colonel Sam Drive in Oshawa, adjacent to OPG's new headquarters building.

This proposed parking lot is being excavated over a historic site, known as the Scugog Carrying Place, which has long been used by our ancestors and community. We have been engaged by the Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario. We understand from these communications that OPG's contractors discovered the ancestral remains after excavations and soil piling. The ancestral remains were found within large, excavated soil piles.

OPG has specific requirements under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, including the requirement to have and maintain a Cultural Heritage Identification and Evaluation policy and related procedures. This document must be publicly available. We have asked for this information but have not received it. We have not found any public records for this required documentation.

As soon as we are aware of pending excavations, we regularly request that companies undertaking excavations take caution and ensure that sites are properly surveyed by a professional archaeologist prior to soil excavation. In this case, the property is situated in a well-known cultural heritage location that has been the subject of numerous books, articles, and cultural heritage studies. Just off Colonel Sam Drive is a commemorative plaque for the Scugog Carrying Place. This plaque was installed ten years ago by the City of Oshawa, with representatives of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation and Alderville First Nation present.

It is with deep frustration and upset that we note contractors undertook these excavations and soil piling, seemingly without the information of an archaeological assessment, or guidance from a cultural heritage policy, in an area publicly well-known as the Scugog Carrying Place. A full archaeological assessment would normally have been conducted before any ground disturbance took place. Our communities expect companies involved in such work to take the steps required by the *Ontario Heritage Act*. This burial site has been desecrated, and our communities are grieving.

We believe there is a high probability that additional ancestors' remains will be found at this site. In response to this discovery, the communities are undertaking a respectful and immediate course of action that includes:

- Engaging with the Chief Coroner and relevant provincial and federal authorities to ensure a lawful and culturally respectful investigation into the circumstances of the excavation.



- Working in partnership with archaeologists, Elders, and community members to ensure the site is protected and treated with the spiritual and cultural care it demands, with additional careful archaeological investigations happen under our guidance; and
- Engaging with OPG to discuss the implementation of a commemorative approach that acknowledges and respects the history and legacy of the Scugog Carrying Place.

Effective immediately, public access to the site has been restricted. We urge the public and media to honour the dignity of the deceased and the privacy of communities now mourning and remembering.

This discovery underscores that Durham Region was not a blank space on a development map prior to the arrival of Europeans. It was, instead, a land rich with life, law, and ceremony for our peoples.

Accordingly, we will be working with OPG to ensure that proper protocols are put in place to protect our cultural heritage, across not just the Scugog Carrying Place, but across other sites. These protocols will ensure the involvement of Elders and Knowledge Keepers and will be implemented with the goal of preventing further desecration of our historic sites.

We call on the Crown and OPG, as a Crown Corporation, to uphold their obligations under Article 11 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. This includes working with us to maintain, protect, and develop the past, present, and future manifestations of our cultures, including the preservation and proper stewardship of our sacred and historic sites.

We will provide updates as they become available. Our Ancestors deserve the dignity and honour that we would accord to any deceased individuals.

Miigwetch,

Chief Taynar Simpson Chief Keith Knott Chief Laurie Carr Chief Kelly LaRocca