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Glyphosate use along the North Shore spurs TEK Elders' direct action August 14th along Highway 17

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SERPENT RIVER, ON –

The attack by the government of Ontario on our Anisinaabek way of life along the North Shore of the Great Lakes continues. In the latest assault, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has given only weeks' notice of a devastating arial herbicide spray operation taking place between August 18 and September 30 across Anishinaabek lands near Elliot Lake, Blind River and Espanola. The operation will douse over 4500 hectares in a commercial formulation containing the herbicide Glyphosate.

This herbicide impacts aquatic life, and kills blueberries and other crucial foods, medicines, and tree species necessary to forest life. In response, the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Elders in the Robinson Huron Treaty Territory are taking action along Highway 17 which runs east-west along the North Shore of Lake Huron.

Joe Jones (Garden River) called for his fellow Traditional Ecological Knowledge Elders to join him in this action in light of recent reporting in Soo Today July 22 by Greg McGrath-Goudie.

"They don't listen", Joe Jones said in response to the Ministry's announcement, "we've been telling them for years this spraying is affecting all our relations, it is killing our Anishinaabek way of life".

TEK Elders began a Stop the Spray campaign to end glyphosate-based herbicide use in Anishinaabek forests along the north shore of Lake Ontario over a decade ago. Elders including Joe Jones observed dramatic changes in moose, deer, muskrat, and other forest life as Jack pine plantations began replacing mixed forests with the help of glyphosate-based herbicide use.

Officials quoted by McGrath-Goudie including MNR spokesperson Mike Fenn claim the herbicide is necessary to "control competing vegetation" and that "re-establishing conifer forests supports biodiversity, provides wildlife habitat, and helps meet long-term wood supply needs"

Fenn claimed in the Soo Today article that Glyphosate-based herbicide "doesn't build up in the environment and breaks down after it sticks to plants or soil," and that only certain areas will be subject to the project.

Elder Caroline Recollet (Whanapitae First Nation), spokesperson for the TEK Elders "Stop the Spray" Campaign, rejects the Ontario Ministry of Natural resources' claims

about the “need” for herbicide “management”, and reminds us that TEK Elders founder Raymond Owl refers to arial glyphosate use as “raining poison from the sky”.

“Ontario has an obligation to respect our Treaty rights”, said Elder Caroline Recollet. “When forests are converted to plantations, all life is affected – we share these lands with all creation”.

When discussing the context for the Highway 17 action, Elder Caroline Recollet points out this forest conversion affects us all – the Anishinaabe, settler descended, and our more than human relatives. The current western science does not support the MNR’s claims of safety and necessity: “Our friends at Safe Food Matters and other international partners have been working on a Global Glyphosate Review for the past 5 years that supports what we Anishinaabek knowledge holders have been saying since Raymond Owl first rallied us together – this entire approach of relying on herbicides in forestry harms our way of life”.

Maps and project details are available to the public through the Natural Resources Information Portal.”

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Traditional Ecological Knowledge Elders Group members have called for a a glyphosate-use moratorium in forestry. TEK Elders Group has met with private companies, government, and NGOs making their case to rescind its approvals of this practice