



# Sol Mamakwa

Member of Provincial Parliament, Kiiwetinoong  
Député provincial de Kiiwetinoong

## Queen's Park

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November 23, 2020

Fort Frances Town Council  
320 Portage Avenue  
Fort Frances, ON, P9A 3P9

## RE: Support for Changing the Name of Colonization Road

Dear Mayor and Council of Fort Frances,

I am writing today to urge you to change the name of Colonization Road.

The process of colonization devastated First Nations communities across the country. Through the colonial project, our land was taken from us, treaty promises were broken, and the ways of life that allowed us to thrive for thousands of years were systematically dismantled. Our traditional practices were replaced with institutions that inflicted tremendous violence against our peoples, including residential schools.

It should also be noted that colonization was not a one-time, historical process. Colonization is very much ongoing, and it is continuing to harm First Nations peoples. I must tell you that Colonization Road is one example of ongoing colonization. This street name serves no greater purpose than to remind First Nations peoples of their dark history with the Canadian state and brings this history into the present.

Moreover, Fort Frances has obligations under the *Human Rights Code* to provide a service environment free of discrimination. According to human rights law, words that degrade people based on factors such as their ancestry, race, and ethnic origin, violate the *Code*. Colonization Road serves to degrade First Nations peoples in the Fort Frances community. It reminds them of all that was taken from them in the past.

In addition, an important call to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was this: "We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous Peoples and lands...." The name 'Colonization Road' is a statement of European superiority over First Nations peoples. It ignores the call to action, and signals to First Nations community members that they are not part of Fort Frances.

Fort Frances's 2019 declaration committing to reconciliation with First Nations peoples was a step in the right direction. However, on its own, this declaration has little power to

make change and improve relations with First Nations peoples. The declaration has to be backed with meaningful action. Changing the name of Colonization Road is one important way to demonstrate that Fort Frances is truly committed to reconciliation. It shows that the town genuinely cares about the social and psychological wellbeing of First Nations peoples. It shows that 'reconciliation' is not just a buzzword, but rather a state that must be worked toward every day.

I urge you, Mayor and Council, to change the name of Colonization Road. While Fort Frances's relationship with First Nations people may be damaged, it is not broken. Changing the name of Colonization Road will work to bring the two communities together and strengthen their relationship. It will show that Fort Frances is committed to creating a community which respects all people. Fort Frances has been taking promising steps towards reconciling with its First Nations peoples. Renaming Colonization Road will be one more meaningful step towards doing so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sol Mamakwa', with a stylized, flowing script.

Sol Mamakwa  
MPP for Kiiwetinoong

cc: Ogichidaa Francis Kavanaugh, Grand Council Treaty #3