

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Chief Porter, we thank you for
2 your message and for your prayer in our language and the
3 poetic and beautiful way that you have given it to us.

4 MR. SKIDDERS: Good afternoon. My name is
5 Brian Skidders and I work with the Mohawk Council on
6 environment division and I have been asked by Mr. Henry
7 Liquors to relay his regrets for not being here. The
8 opportunity to help familiarize yourself and others of the
9 environmental problems facing Akwesasne residents daily
10 will be of great assistance to both personnel from the
11 state as well as the Akwesasne to realize the clean safe
12 environment. Akwesasne environmental concern is a very
13 basic need to a healthy environment and I would just like
14 to mention to you today about some of the concerns that we
15 have. I guess I would just read this out to you. It would
16 be easier for me.

17 It's not without mental anguish that the
18 residents of the Akwesasne each spring bring to till their
19 soil for another year of gardening. Questions like how bad
20 is this soil? Am I far enough away from the plants? Am I
21 doing my children more harm than good by feeding them from
22 this soil? All these questions and more are asked by
23 residents each spring as they begin another planting
24 season.

1 one of the other speakers of the group. Thank you.

2 CHIEF PORTER: At this time, I would like to
3 speak with you, the delegates from the various departments
4 and government departments, and I speak with you in your
5 own language so that you may understand the concerns of the
6 Mohawk people. A number of years ago, the leaders of the
7 Mohawk people assembled and were informed of this gathering
8 in this hearings in this investigation and they thought
9 that it was way past due, that this should come to the
10 forefront, and when they have heard of this, they are the
11 ones who send this delegation here to join with you to make
12 this discussion on the environment because it is the most
13 important in our life.

14 I carry with me the greetings of our leaders,
15 the men leaders as well as the women leaders, and the
16 people who hold no positions of government who are the free
17 people, the men and women and our young people, the
18 children to the little tiny children, the babies in the
19 cradleboards, and I carry the words of all of these
20 different age groups of people of our nation, the Mohawk
21 Nation.

22 They send their greetings and their best wishes
23 to you, the leaders of the different environmental
24 departments and government department, state and federal or

1 whatever other leaders will be present. And they said when
2 you return from the hearing and this gathering, that you
3 should carry with you back to your government seats, to
4 your homes, to your wives and your family and your
5 children, the greetings of the leaders and people and the
6 children of the Mohawk Nation goes back with you.

7 It is at this time that I want to offer a
8 prayer. I guess you could say it's a prayer in English,
9 but English is a very hard language to interpret. In my
10 language, we call it (inaudible) and it is these words
11 which in English would probably be called a prayer before
12 any meeting of government, before any meeting of a
13 ceremony, a religious gathering, before anything that is
14 important. It is these words that must be said. And if I
15 interpret it into English in the most proper way it will
16 say (inaudible). (Inaudible) means in the front of,
17 (inaudible) means the issues are matters of importance, the
18 thing that is said before anything important is discussed,
19 and this is what I would like to address at this time.

20 At this time, the people are gathered here and
21 the leaders are gathered here and the women and everyone is
22 gathered. As we look about one another, it appears that we
23 seem to be in good health physically, and also emotionally
24 there seems to be a certain amount of peace that all

1 retains in this gathering.

2 Why is it that way? There is a reason for that
3 great privilege to meet each other gathered here today on
4 this very important day. We will give greetings and
5 gratitude to one another's company as we are assembled
6 here. We are grateful for one another.

7 The next is our creator make the earth in the
8 beginning of time. Beyond the memory of you and I, when
9 our great-great-grandfathers were first born and given the
10 breath of life, our creator at that time said the earth
11 will be your mother. And the creator said to the deers and
12 to the animals and to the birds, the earth will be your
13 mother, too. And I have instructed the earth to give food
14 and nourishment and medicine and a quenching of thirst to
15 all life. And since the very beginning of time, before the
16 memory of you and I, Mother Earth has fulfilled that what
17 the creator told her.

18 And so I ask that we the children gathered here
19 today will bring our minds together as one and we will say
20 to our Mother Earth spirit, we your children here thank you
21 since the beginning of time for this opportunity to live
22 and for following the creator's way. We the people humbly
23 thank you today, Mother Earth.

24 It is another that our creator made the rivers

1 and the streams and the rains and the oceans. And in the
2 beginning of time, beyond the memory of you and I, our
3 creators spoke to the rivers and our creator made the
4 rivers not just an H2O, but he made the rivers a living
5 entity. And our creator spoke to the river and he said the
6 Mississippi will be the great-grandpa and the St. Lawrence
7 will be the uncle and the other small streams will be the
8 cousins. And altogether, those rivers of Mother Earth and
9 lakes will be the blood veins of our mother, our beautiful
10 mother. We must make sure that those are always cleaned so
11 that there will not be a heart attack some day to our
12 mother.

13 The creator told the river spirit he will move
14 as a sign of life and so the Niagara Falls moved very
15 strongly, the St. Lawrence as well, looking for all its
16 children, both bear, deer, Mohawk, English, French, Irish
17 and whatever else to quench the thirst of us. And when we
18 drink each cold glass of water, when our throat is so dry,
19 there isn't a more wonderful feeling of peace and
20 continuity of our life and tranquility than what that
21 fresh cold glass of water can do. Our creator make those
22 rivers and lakes and he said whenever you're dry and
23 thirsty, go there, any river, any stream, and it will
24 quench your thirst, for that is the way I make the world.

1 So, I ask these fine human beings gathered here
2 of many colors, many shapes, some tall, some sort, that we
3 in our diversity will be one on these instances and we will
4 bring our minds as one mind and we will say to the spirit
5 of the rivers and the streams and the lakes and the oceans
6 who quench our thirst, we thank you for this day and this
7 life and life on behalf of our children we are grateful.

8 It is another what our creator did, our creator
9 make the birds and of all the birds that he made, he chose
10 one would be the eagle and the eagle would fly the highest
11 and he will be guardian spirit of our people.

12 And our creator upon making us as a human being
13 in the beginning of the world did not want us to become
14 lonely or bored with life, he did not want us to hasten our
15 departure of death since our birth in order that boredom
16 will not set in, he gave the birds a meeting and in the big
17 meeting of all the birds, he gave each one a song and a
18 tune and he ordered the birds of all sizes every morning as
19 the new brother sun shines the dawn of a new day, you will
20 begin to sing your chorus and your orchestra and you will
21 shape the minds of the humans, the deers and the bear so
22 that they will not hasten to go and leave and die, that
23 they will be joy and there will be pleasantness. And every
24 morning since the beginning of time, the robin, the

1 blackbird, the sparrows, the pigeon, every one begins to
2 sing for you and I. Again this morning, it was so. That
3 is the creator's law.

4 To the spirit of the birds of the world, we the
5 human beings gather here of one mind and we send piled up
6 high our gratitude in our greetings to all the birds of the
7 world for your beautiful song and the tranquility it brings
8 with each new day. We the human beings thank you at this
9 time. We are grateful.

10 Our creator maked the sun and he says the sun
11 will be your eldest brotner. And in the beginning of the
12 world our creator told the sun, you the sun will come every
13 day to the people. You will wake them up and you will
14 bring a light to the darkness of their world. You will
15 start in the east and go to the west to the Mohawk, Creole,
16 Crow, to the Pacific Ocean. And our old brother sun never
17 stopped since the beginning of time. Just as faithful as
18 could be with commitment, truth and justice, he has shined
19 that light and that energy so that our world will not turn
20 into a block of ice. Our old brother sun gave us miracle
21 again today since many thousand of years. You and I are
22 the younger brothers and sisters of that old brother sun.
23 He is the eldest. He is our caretaker. He will watch us
24 and give us strengtn.

1 So, I ask again in the most oldest tradition of
2 the western hemisphere that we bring our minds together as
3 one mind, we human beings gathered here today, and let us
4 pile our gratitude and our greetings high and let us
5 jointly together pick up that big pile of gratitude and
6 greetings and let us throw it to our old brother sun and
7 say thank you, oh brother son, for the miracle of this day
8 today.

9 It is another that our creator made a nighttime
10 sun called our grandmother, the moon, who is the head woman
11 of all mothers of the entire world. Our creator gave the
12 moon our grandmother the power to regulate the birth of all
13 nations, when will the children be born by every woman,
14 red, white and yellow, and purple, if you like, every 28
15 and 30 days their blood will change and purify so that a
16 little tiny baby can find a bed to start to grow so that
17 the nations of the world will be replenished. And so our
18 grandmother, the grandest of women, continues her job and
19 our children are happy.

20 So, let us bring our minds again grandchildren,
21 you and I, together as one and let us throw our gratitude
22 and our greetings to our grandmother the moon for
23 continuing to give birth to our children and perhaps or
24 great grandchildren. Grandmother moon, we your

1 grandchildren thank you for the light of the past night.

2 It is now to our creator who made the entire
3 universe and he said to our people, the Mohawk Indian
4 people, that Mohawk humans, you are but a child in the
5 universe. The grandmother is older than you and more
6 powerful than you. The old brother sun is older than you
7 and more powerful than you. The Mississippi River is your
8 greatgrandfather and the St. Lawrence is your uncle. You
9 the people, the Mohawks, the Irish, the English, the
10 Canadian, the American, the Mohawk are only but children in
11 the big family of the universe. You must have a reverence
12 and the great respect for your mother the earth, for your
13 grandmother the moon, for your eldest brother the sun, and
14 if you can do this simple little task, everything is at
15 your fingertips for you to live in peace. But you must
16 each day say thank you to every gift that contribute to
17 your life and take only what you need from day to day and
18 your life, if you follow this pattern, will be like a
19 circle with no end. Your life will be everlasting as your
20 children will carry on your flesh, your blood and your
21 heartbeat.

22 And it is this prayer, if you like to call it,
23 which is said before any important issue so that we will
24 remain connected as a human civilized people in the efforts

1 of what the creator gave to us for our job on this planet
2 called Mother Earth. In this universe our first
3 instruction is that we must work endlessly without tiring
4 for the sake of our children and our next children as that
5 is the purpose of our birth on this planet is to do
6 everything so that our children will have a chance. That
7 is the first law of our creator, and we need every single
8 thing that is in the environment to do that.

9 When we say environment to the Mohawk, you are
10 actually saying God the creator, for every aspect is God's
11 doing. And so on behalf of our delegation, we bring these
12 words of prayer, these words of greetings from our nation
13 to yours, from our leaders, our men leaders, women leaders,
14 our men and women and your children, so that we may do
15 something fast. What the creator wants us to do is to
16 clean every river and every lake and every area and every
17 part of Mother Earth's body and that not the dollar sign be
18 an obstacle to that endeavor but that our children, the
19 newborn ones, be our goal tomorrow and tomorrow and the
20 next tomorrow.

21 Our delegation, our technical people, they have
22 gone to some changes in the United States' finest
23 university to learn about technical things, biology,
24 chemical levels, toxins, something that is foreign to the

1 Mohawk but something that we had no choice of the matter,
2 and they will speak shortly as to what they have found and
3 to some of their recommendations as my children and your
4 children need some help very badly.

5 I want to end my sentiment of the message of the
6 Mohawk people by a statement that one of our women made
7 several years ago, and I hope that you will take it as a
8 warning and as an advice for the benefit of our
9 grandchildren. She said, Mr. President and world leaders
10 of the whole world, when you have polluted the last river
11 and when you have caught the last fish and when you have
12 cut down the last tree, Mr. President and world leaders, it
13 is too bad that then and only then will you realize that
14 you cannot eat all the money that's in the bank.

15 For the sake of your children and my children
16 and our great great-grandchildren, I ask you now, honorable
17 men leaders and people, scientists, biologists, we better
18 get it together quick. This is the message from the Mohawk
19 people.

20 And I thank you for this time and this
21 opportunity and I'd like that you listen to our technical
22 young people whose philosophy along with the technical
23 skills learned from your country have combined it to try to
24 find a place, a safe place to put our feet. Thank you.