



# Algonquins of Ontario

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**BY EMAIL ONLY**

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Dear Editor,

We read with interest your February 18, 2016 article in The Frontenac News entitled “Land claim elector criteria coming under scrutiny as vote nears.”

There is information crucial to the Treaty beneficiary issue that is misstated or missing in the article.

First, the claim has not been “25”, but rather “250” years in the making dating back to when the Algonquins first petitioned for a Treaty pursuant to the terms of the Royal Proclamation and were thereafter studiously ignored by the Crown until recently.

Second, when it comes to ultimately establishing meaningful beneficiary criteria, the Algonquins of Ontario (AOO) have strived to ensure that those Algonquins in Ontario who possess Aboriginal rights and title are eligible to be included in any modern-day Treaty. This is crucial to ensuring that the Treaty is legally valid and that there is certainty for all concerned. The negotiation parties (the AOO and the governments of Ontario and Canada) have expressed their common view that the beneficiary criteria contained in the proposed Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) properly reflect the current law with respect to communities located in Ontario that might possess Algonquin Aboriginal rights as well as the Algonquin membership of those communities. As is evident within the proposed AIP the “final” beneficiary criteria are not complete and further work remains to be done in respect of custom adoption, community acceptance and other matters that may be considered before a Treaty is voted upon. Of course, this is all contingent on a positive vote on the proposed AIP by Algonquin Voters.

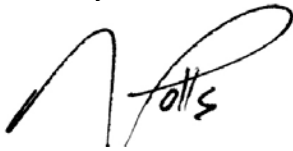
Third, the characterization of the beneficiary criteria outlined in the article was not complete. In addition to tracing ancestry to an Algonquin Ancestor and demonstrating a cultural or social connection to a modern-day Algonquin Community located in Ontario, an applicant also has to demonstrate a recent connection by descent within roughly the last century to an Algonquin community located in Ontario. Moreover, the proposed AIP provides for a rigorous analysis of

Enrolment Applications by both a genealogist and a tri-partite Ratification Committee to determine eligibility. Once an Applicant is deemed to be eligible the process still allows for an open and transparent scrutiny of an initial Voters List and access to an appeal process through a protest if a challenge is deemed warranted. An eminent retired judge of the Ontario Superior Court was even appointed to address many of the more complex and contentious of these protests.

Finally, the proposed beneficiary criteria correct a historic injustice whereby groups of Algonquins were never recognized as "Bands" or First Nations under the *Indian Act* save for one, Pikwakanagan. And even that community was obliged to purchase its own Reserve. Despite this non-recognition and not having the benefits of their own land base and own local governments, these groups of Algonquins persevered in the face of assimilation and disintegration pressures. The proposed AIP would correct this injustice by recognizing the modern-day Algonquin collectives as communities that will appropriately, and as a matter of law, hold treaty rights once the Treaty is concluded.

The negotiation parties have made ongoing efforts to share information so that all interested parties can learn about this important historical initiative and to better understand these complex negotiations. We encourage those who are interested to read the materials that are publicly posted, including the complete proposed Agreement-in-Principle, at [www.tanakiwin.com](http://www.tanakiwin.com).

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Potts', with a large, stylized initial 'R'.

Robert Potts  
Principal Negotiator and Senior Legal Counsel  
Algonquin Treaty Negotiations