



10526 Highway 3
Yarmouth, NS - B5A 5J9
Tel: (902) 742-0257
Toll-free: 1 (866) 670-8086
Fax: (902) 742-8854

February 15, 2025

Dear Band Members,

On Thursday February 13, 2025, the RCMP made arrests on the Gold River Reserve of certain individuals who were involved in private cannabis stores. These investigations and arrests were done by the RCMP, not by the Wasoqopa'q First Nation. The RCMP does not need the permission of Chief and Council to exercise their federal policing powers. Chief and Council were not involved in these RCMP arrests.

Last year, Chief and Council sought input about cannabis stores on our reserves from our Band members through a survey. A majority of Band members did not support the operation of private cannabis stores on our reserves. The cannabis stores that were raided by the RCMP were not licenced or approved in any way by Wasoqopa'q Chief and Council. There is no process to verify what is being sold from them, and whether what is being sold is healthy for customers.

On Thursday afternoon, in apparent reaction to the RCMP arrests, some individuals broke the law by overtaking our Gold Nugget store and gas bar. Physical assaults and other crimes were committed. Some of those who were involved are being investigated for further offences. The Gold Nugget store and gas bar are owned by a company. The company is owned by our First Nation as a whole and not individual Band members.

On February 14th several protestors illegally blocked our staff from entering the store and prevented it from opening. Some of those stopping our store from operating had already been banned from the business by store management.

The Gold Nugget store and gas bar remain closed. That closure hurts our First Nation, as many of our members work there and Band members rely on the store for their needs including fuel and food, which they are now being denied.

There is, in any democracy, a right of peaceful protest. What is happening at our Gold Nugget store is not a peaceful protest. It is an illegal blockage of our businesses and an intimidation of and an assault on our employees.

A very few of our Band members, who were running personal businesses for their own benefit, are now acting to hurt our First Nation business, which then hurts all of us. Protestors are blocking our business, scaring our customers and disturbing the location where our after-school program takes place and now has to close. These illegal activities have to stop.

Wasoqopa'q First Nation Chief and Council