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Mr. Gary McHale
Caledonia Wake-Up Call

Dear Mr. McHale,

I respectfully ask that you refrain from your planned rally in Caledonia on January 20, as well as any further potential protests in this extremely sensitive area. The families and residents of Caledonia's neighbourhoods have suffered immeasurable and ongoing tensions for almost a year now, and I fear that your rally will only serve to exacerbate the situation. The people of Caledonia deserve better.

During my six visits to Caledonia since the land occupation began, I have heard personal stories of horrible disruptions to people's lives. During a recent stay overnight with one family, I was deeply affected as I listened to how innocent children are living in fear, having to go to school where a police presence is required and being faced with a barricade in their home town. Neighbours worry about each other's safety and wonder why their government has abandoned them, and parents endure painful frustration over how their children are being impacted. I worry about how long the deep harm to the residents of Caledonia and members of Six Nations will take to heal.

There can be no argument that a tremendous tragedy has been allowed to occur in this community, but I maintain that your efforts to focus attention on the dangerous precedents and lawlessness that have occurred in Caledonia should be redirected to the principal party that is responsible – the Dalton McGuinty government.

Dalton McGuinty set a dangerous precedent by purchasing the land and allowing protesters to continue occupying it despite his own conditions being flouted. Dalton McGuinty failed to take any action despite stating an occupation into the winter would be unacceptable. Dalton McGuinty dismissed the plight of Caledonia by telling the rest of the province and nation that the occupation has gone largely without incident and refusing to visit Caledonia personally. The McGuinty Cabinet minimized the conflict by calling it symbolic, ignoring promises of compensation made to homeowners months

ago, and simply opening up the public cheque book to pay for ongoing policing costs rather than work to resolve the situation.

It is clear where accountability lies, although the Premier has refused to even abide by the democratic will of the Legislature's vote to open an inquiry into how the Caledonia situation has been mishandled.

The disturbing acts of violence, disorder and lawlessness associated with the land occupation have had an immeasurable impact in Caledonia and have set a terrible precedent in Ontario. These events have also raised a very substantial degree of concern as to whether we are drifting towards different legal standards for different groups of people, a dangerous drift indeed regardless of the groups involved. I continue to call on all parties to apply one legal standard to all, and to abide by the rule of law, whether it is those occupying the land or the frustrated residents of Caledonia, and to refrain from provocative actions.

I suggest that a much more constructive action on your part would be to direct your rally to the front steps of the provincial Legislature to pressure Premier McGuinty to live up to his responsibilities.

Sincerely,



John Tory, MPP
Leader, Official Opposition of Ontario
Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario