



# Ontario Native Women's Association

## Fact Sheet: Idle No More and Bill C-45

On Tuesday December 11<sup>th</sup>, Chief Theresa Spence of Attawapiskat First Nation, launched a hunger strike in protest of the persistent systematic disrespect shown for First Nation peoples by the Conservative government. The Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) is joining in the support for her cause and strongly urges for an immediate and meaningful response by the Federal government.

Chief Spence has pledged to continue her hunger strike until the Prime Minister and Queen agree to meet with First Nation Chiefs to discuss the importance of respecting the spirit and intent of the treaties formed between Canada and the First Nations people.

One particular area of contention is the omnibus Bill C-45 which drastically impacts First Nations rights through the proposed changes to the Indian Act, Fisheries Act, Canadian Environmental Protection Act, and the Navigable Water Protection Act. The existing amendments to the Indian Act are clearly designed to give the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs access over First Nations' lands and permit the Minister to exercise undue influence over vulnerable communities. Bill C-45 passed third-reading in the senate on December 14, 2012, and has received Royal Assent. First Nations activists across Canada have been holding rallies to protest Bill C-45 as part of a growing grassroots movement known as Idle No More.

The key amendment to the Act provides the government with the authority to determine the surrender of any portion of any First Nation territory at any given time. This clause directly contravenes the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which calls for the "free, prior and informed consent" of all Indigenous peoples exercising their right of self-determination.

Chief Spence has said that she wants the federal government to withdraw recent legislation which was forced upon aboriginals and calls for the reversal of its decision to cut funding to First Nation organizations and communities - and she is willing to risk her own life in the hopes that these needs will be met.

**[www.onwa-tbay.ca](http://www.onwa-tbay.ca)**

380 Ray Blvd, Thunder Bay, ON P7B 4E6 • Phone: (807) 623-3442 • Toll Free: 1-800-667-0816 • Fax: (807) 623-1104



# Ontario Native Women's Association

## What can I do to help support Chief Spence and protest Bill C-45?

- Sign a petition (See: Petition To Oppose Bill C-45-idle No More Documents Sharing Page-<https://www.facebook.com>)
- Keep informed about the status of the bills (See: Legislative Information Page: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/LEGISINFO>)
- Attend Rallies/events calling for the withdrawal of Bill C-45 and other Bills that will impact First Nations people including:

-**Bill C-27 - First Nations Financial Transparency Act**

-**Bill S-6-First Nations Elections Act**

-**Bill S-8-Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act**

-**Bill S-2-Family Homes on Reserves and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act**

-**Bill C-428-Indian Act Amendment and Replacement Act.**

-**Bill S-207- An Act to amend the Interpretation Act** (non-derogation of aboriginal and treaty Rights)

- **Bill S-212 First Nations Self-Government Recognition Act**

**[www.onwa-tbay.ca](http://www.onwa-tbay.ca)**

380 Ray Blvd, Thunder Bay, ON P7B 4E6 • Phone: (807) 623-3442 • Toll Free: 1-800-667-0816 • Fax: (807) 623-1104