

Norio, Ann-Marie

From: Roman Soos [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 13, 2023 9:05 AM
To: Norio, Ann-Marie
Cc: Sawchuk, William; Chiocchio, Pat; Kaiser, Andrea; Morocco, Joyce; Bateman, Haley; Craitor, Kim; Burch-QP, Jeff; Carmen DeRose
Subject: Letter for Niagara Regional Council for Public Agenda July 20 Regular Council

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Good day Niagara Regional Council,

I am writing this letter to respectfully voice my complete opposition in ending the state of emergency for mental health, homelessness and addiction, as Councillor Pat Chiocchio stated publicly...it simply makes no sense to end the emergency.

It is personally disheartening to continue to listen to some Councillors state publicly that the emergency is "symbolic," in the past other Regional officials have stated it would not lead to any additional money..but yet at the same time, the same Niagara Region officials stating this should be well aware of the 20.8 million dollars we got from the provincial government (homeless prevention in Niagara) and the 9 million dollars we got from the federal government for emergency domestic abuse focused shelters for women and children in Niagara and not to mention the Premiers direct announcement to build more rehab facilities in Niagara Region- all in response to the state of emergency on mental health, homelessness and addiction.

[LETTER: Government responses to the mental health, addiction and homelessness emergency - PelhamToday.ca](#)

[Mental health advocate asks Grimsby council for support \(niagarathisweek.com\)](#)

[Feds giving women's shelters in Fort Erie and St. Catharines \\$9M to expand and improve \(iheartradio.ca\)](#)

Why would we want to kill this progress and new investment coming in for the issues of homelessness, mental health and addiction by removing the very tool (the state of emergency) that is making it possible for us to access these funds....I think 5 months is not giving this emergency a fair chance...

The committee vote to end the state of emergency simply looked indecisive to myself and several other residents. After Niagara declared the emergency, we became an example for the entire country with housing advocacy groups in Northwest Territories even pushing for an Indigenous housing emergency in the Territory based on what we did here...

[LETTER: Indigenous housing problems getting national recognition - PelhamToday.ca](#)

[Northwest Territories: Housing groups call for state of emergency for Indigenous people | CTV News](#)

We have Hamilton, London, Toronto, Kingston, St. Catharines, Grimsby, Niagara Falls, Welland, and Thorold who all stood behind us...I am speaking to people from coast to coast about this emergency, including Canadian Senators from Quebec... I don't know why we would end this type of momentum...this state of emergency gives families and people learning about it all over the country hope. That was because this

Niagara Regional Council choose to be brave and set the example that these issues are an emergency- that I respect- the flip flopping, I do not.

Respectfully, I am not here to debate adjectives- I acknowledge mental health, homelessness, and addiction as a crisis and an emergency- so if Councillors want to add crisis- I have no problem- but if you want progress to continue for residents on these issues- it has to remain an emergency to.

And feelings should not govern whether we should end the emergency- statistics should....

So we have a suicide rate higher than the provincial average in the province, We have Niagara youth at increased risk of opioid death [Niagara youth facing increased risk of death from opioid overdose | The Star](#) Jan-June/2022- 64 Niagara residents died with 11 deaths a month- and just this year 259 suspected opioid overdoses from only Jan-May 2023. And I have been monitoring the shelter beds in Niagara for about 4 weeks now, and they are always consistently full...people are being told by outreach workers when they call 211 "don't know what to do for you."

[Opioid Usage - Statistics in Niagara - Niagara Region, Ontario](#)

I think until there are actual indicators that suicide deaths, overdose deaths are decreasing, and there are actually rehabs established, shelters established, greater mental health supports- especially in the hospital, not to mention a approx. 900 day waitlist for youth mental health services in Niagara. The public want to see actual results- again not a debate about adjectives.

I am glad staff is going above and beyond on this issue- everyone needs to, to properly address the emergency. We all have gone above and beyond, so why quit after all that hardwork? If we don't tackle this emergency now, it will effect future generations, and we as an Canadian economy (and Niagara gets directly impacted as well) will continue to experience financial devastation and loss because we gave up on addressing and responding to this emergency. We are already losing 40 billion a year in losses from substance abuse in Canada and 50 billion from losses on mental health.

Finally, the state of emergency in Niagara is viewed by many in the local Indigenous community, including myself as a colleterial benefit to Indigenous Reconciliation. [The Way I See It: State of Emergency a collateral benefit in Reconciliation \(niagarathisweek.com\)](#)

Many municipalities like Grimsby, St. Catharines and Thorold have also passed follow up motions after Niagara Region declared. These follow up motions have been on the domestic abuse shelters, using the emergency as a tool to get mental health and addiction services established in WLMH, condemning the discrimination of mentally ill, homelessness and addicted in St. Catharines, the food security motion passed unanimously in Thorold and food security and mental health are for sure connected! These have all been initiatives that have come to life as a result of Niagara's emergency, and we are nowhere near scratching the surface of the emergency declaration's full potential.

I was also going to introduce an Indigenous Reconciliation motion as an additional response to Niagara's emergency on mental health, homelessness and addiction- included in that is an Indigenous mental health mobile crisis unit and developing an Indigenous housing plan at the Region, since 22.6% of our homeless population in Niagara are Indigenous.

[Soos advocates for Indigenous mobile crisis unit - Niagara-on-the-Lake Local \(notllocal.com\)](#)

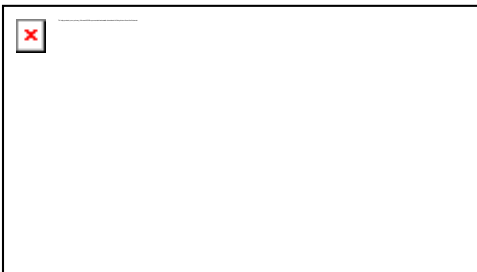
Please do not end the emergency which has become again, such a significant tool in the push for Reconciliation. So many Indigenous leaders including Indigenous Canadian Senators and MP's know about Niagara's emergency, and are being inspired by our leadership to lead an emergency effort on their land. [Mikisew Cree First Nation declares state of local emergency following multiple suicides | CBC News](#)

I ask all Regional Councillors to support keeping in place the emergency declaration for mental health, homelessness and addiction.

Marsee,

Steven Roman Soos,

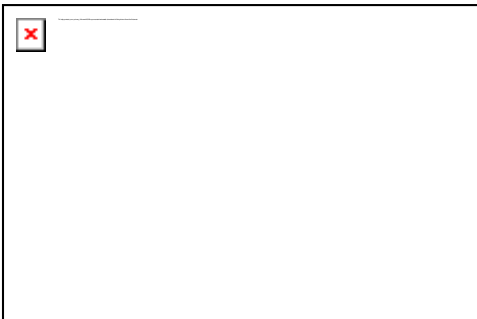
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[Mikisew Cree First Nation declares state of local emergency following multiple suicides | CBC News](#)

A First Nation in northern Alberta has declared a state of local emergency following a string of suicide and suicide attempts among community members.

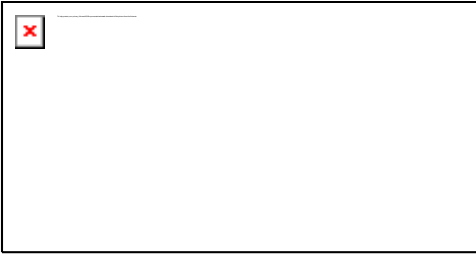
www.cbc.ca



[Soos advocates for Indigenous mobile crisis unit](#)

Steven Soos admits his rebel heart often gets him into trouble, but that won't stop the self-professed dreamer from continuing his advocacy to mitigate Niagara's mental health, homelessness and addiction crisis.

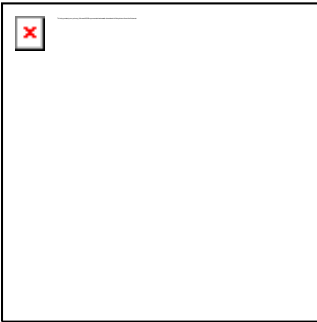
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The Way I See It: State of Emergency a collateral benefit in Reconciliation

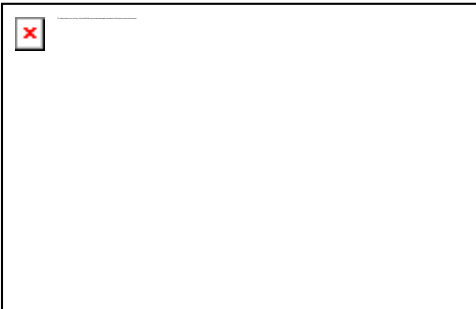
A rose goes to Steven Soos, a local advocate who put his heart and soul into making sure so many voices were heard. We all thank you for pushing for

www.niagarathisweek.com



Opioid Usage - Statistics in Niagara - Niagara Region, Ontario

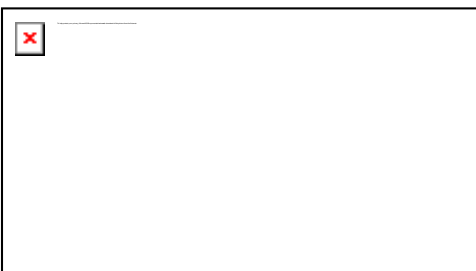
<http://www.niagararegion.ca>



Niagara youth facing increased risk of death from opioid overdose

Niagara youth are at higher risk of an opioid overdose leaving many outreach and harm reduction workers concerned

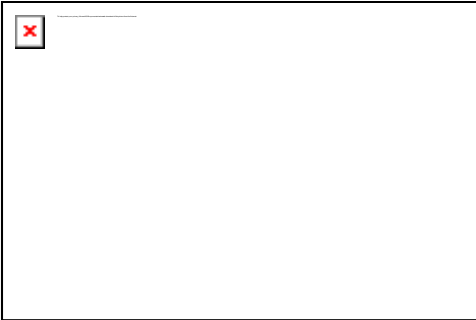
www.thestar.com



Housing groups call for state of emergency for Indigenous people in N.W.T.

Two national housing groups are calling on the Northwest Territories to declare a state of emergency for housing Indigenous people, particularly women and girls.

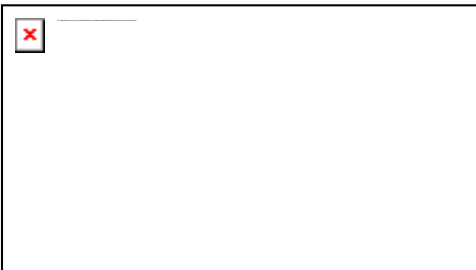
www.ctvnews.ca



LETTER: Indigenous housing problems getting national recognition

'I cried after the news and especially finding out on National Indigenous Peoples Day'

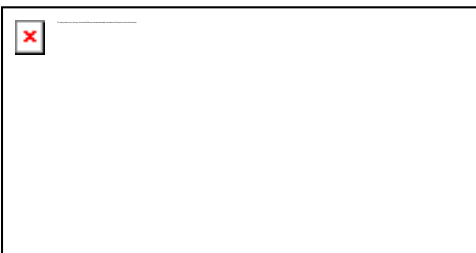
www.pelhamtoday.ca



Feds giving women's shelters in Fort Erie and St. Catharines \$9M to expand and improve

Federal cash is on the way to help shelters for abused women and children in Niagara.

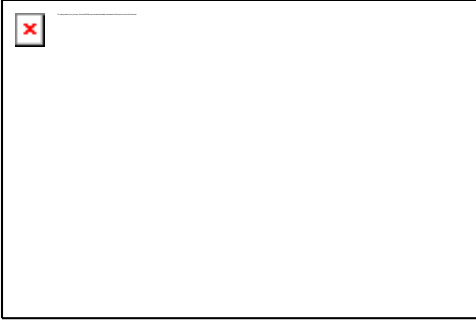
www.iheartradio.ca



Mental health advocate stops in Grimsby to ask council for support

Steven Soos is making the rounds to all of Niagara's municipalities, getting councils to push for more mental health supports.

www.niagarathisweek.com



LETTER: Government responses to the
mental health, addiction and
homelessness emergency

property=

www.pelhamtoday.ca