THE CHAIRMAN: Chief Porter, we thank you for your message and for your prayer in our language and the poetic and beautiful way that you have given it to us.

MR. SKIDDERS: Good afternoon. My name is Brian Skidders and I work with the Mohawk Council on environment division and I have been asked by Mr. Henry Liqurs to relay his regrets for not being here. The opportunity to help familiarize yourself and others of the environmental problems facing Akwesasne residents daily will be of great assistance to both personnel from the state as well as the Akwesasne to realize the clean safe environment. Akwesasne environmental concern is a very basic need to a healthy environment and I would just like to mention to you today about some of the concerns that we have. I guess I would just read this out to you. It would be easier for me.

It's not without mental anguish that the residents of the Akwesasne each spring bring to till their soil for another year of gardening. Questions like how bad is this soil? Am I far enough away from the plants? Am I doing my children more harm than good by feeding them from this soil? All these questions and more are asked by residents each spring as they begin another planting season.
one of the other speakers of the group. Thank you.

CHIEF PORTER: At this time, I would like to
speak with you, the delegates from the various departments
and government departments, and I speak with you in your
own language so that you may understand the concerns of the
Mohawk people. A number of years ago, the leaders of the
Mohawk people assembled and were informed of this gathering
in this hearings in this investigation and they thought
that it was way past due, that this should come to the
forefront, and when they have heard of this, they are the
ones who send this delegation here to join with you to make
this discussion on the environment because it is the most
important in our life.

I carry with me the greetings of our leaders,
the men leaders as well as the women leaders, and the
people who hold no positions of government who are the free
people, the men and women and our young people, the
children to the little tiny children, the babies in the
cradleboards, and I carry the words of all of these
different age groups of people of our nation, the Mohawk
Nation.

They send their greetings and their best wishes
to you, the leaders of the different environmental
departments and government department, state and federal or
whatever other leaders will be present. And they said when you return from the hearing and this gathering, that you should carry with you back to your government seats, to your homes, to your wives and your family and your children, the greetings of the leaders and people and the children of the Mohawk Nation goes back with you.

It is at this time that I want to offer a prayer. I guess you could say it's a prayer in English, but English is a very hard language to interpret. In my language, we call it (inaudible) and it is these words which in English would probably be called a prayer before any meeting of government, before any meeting of a ceremony, a religious gathering, before anything that is important. It is these words that must be said. And if I interpret it into English in the most proper way it will say (inaudible). (Inaudible) means in the front of, (inaudible) means the issues are matters of importance, the thing that is said before anything important is discussed, and this is what I would like to address at this time.

At this time, the people are gathered here and the leaders are gathered here and the women and everyone is gathered. As we look about one another, it appears that we seem to be in good health physically, and also emotionally there seems to be a certain amount of peace that all
retains in this gathering.

Why is it that way? There is a reason for that great privilege to meet each other gathered here today on this very important day. We will give greetings and gratitude to one another's company as we are assembled here. We are grateful for one another.

The next is our creator make the earth in the beginning of time. Beyond the memory of you and I, when our great-great-grandfathers were first born and given the breath of life, our creator at that time said the earth will be your mother. And the creator said to the deers and to the animals and to the birds, the earth will be your mother, too. And I have instructed the earth to give food and nourishment and medicine and a quenching of thirst to all life. And since the very beginning of time, before the memory of you and I, Mother Earth has fulfilled that what the creator told her.

And so I ask that we the children gathered here today will bring our minds together as one and we will say to our Mother Earth spirit, we your children here thank you since the beginning of time for this opportunity to live and for following the creator's way. We the people humbly thank you today, Mother Earth.

It is another that our creator made the rivers
and the streams and the rains and the oceans. And in the
beginning of time, beyond the memory of you and I, our
creators spoke to the rivers and our creator made the
rivers not just an H2O, but he made the rivers a living
entity. And our creator spoke to the river and he said the
Mississippi will be the great-grandpa and the St. Lawrence
will be the uncle and the other small streams will be the
cousins. And altogether, those rivers of Mother Earth and
lakes will be the blood veins of our mother, our beautiful
mother. We must make sure that those are always cleaned so
that there will not be a heart attack some day to our
mother.

The creator told the river spirit he will move
as a sign of life and so the Niagara Falls moved very
strongly, the St. Lawrence as well, looking for all its
children, both bear, deer, Mohawk, English, French, Irish
and whatever else to quench the thirst of us. And when we
drink each cold glass of water, when our throat is so dry,
there isn't a more wonderful feeling of peace and
continuity of our life and tranquility than what that
fresh cold glass of water can do. Our creator make those
rivers and lakes and he said whenever you're dry and
thirsty, go there, any river, any stream, and it will
quench your thirst, for that is the way I make the world.
So, I ask these fine human beings gathered here
of many colors, many shapes, some tall, some sort, that we
in our diversity will be one on these instances and we will
bring our minds as one mind and we will say to the spirit
of the rivers and the streams and the lakes and the oceans
who quench our thirst, we thank you for this day and this
life and life on behalf of our children we are grateful.

It is another what our creator did, our creator
make the birds and of all the birds that he maked, he chose
one would be the eagle and the eagle would fly the highest
and he will be guardian spirit of our people.

And our creator upon making us as a human being
in the beginning of the world did not want us to become
lonely or bored with life, he did not want us to hasten our
departure of death since our birth in order that boredom
will not set in, he gave the birds a meeting and in the big
meeting of all the birds, he gave each one a song and a
tune and he ordered the birds of all sizes every morning as
the new brother sun shines the dawn of a new day, you will
begin to sing your chorus and your orchestra and you will
shape the minds of the humans, the deers and the bear so
that they will not hasten to go and leave and die, that
they will be joy and there will be pleasantness. And every
morning since the beginning of time, the robin, the
blackbird, the sparrows, the pigeon, every one begins to
sing for you and I. Again this morning, it was so. That
is the creator's law.

To the spirit of the birds of the world, we the
human beings gather here of one mind and we send piled up
high our gratitude in our greetings to all the birds of the
world for your beautiful song and the tranquility it brings
with each new day. We the human beings thank you at this
time. We are grateful.

Our creator made the sun and he says the sun
will be your eldest brother. And in the beginning of the
world our creator told the sun, you the sun will come every
day to the people. You will wake them up and you will
bring a light to the darkness of their world. You will
start in the east and go to the west to the Mohawk, Creole,
Crow, to the Pacific Ocean. And our old brother sun never
stopped since the beginning of time. Just as faithful as
could be with commitment, truth and justice, he has shined
that light and that energy so that our world will not turn
into a block of ice. Our old brother sun gave us miracle
again today since many thousand of years. You and I are
the younger brothers and sisters of that old brother sun.
He is the eldest. He is our caretaker. He will watch us
and give us strength.
So, I ask again in the most oldest tradition of the western hemisphere that we bring our minds together as one mind, we human beings gathered here today, and let us pile our gratitude and our greetings high and let us jointly together pick up that big pile of gratitude and greetings and let us throw it to our old brother sun and say thank you, oh brother son, for the miracle of this day today.

It is another that our creator made a nighttime sun called our grandmother, the moon, who is the head woman of all mothers of the entire world. Our creator gave the moon our grandmother the power to regulate the birth of all nations, when will the children be born by every woman, red, white and yellow, and purple, if you like, every 28 and 30 days their blood will change and purify so that a little tiny baby can find a bed to start to grow so that the nations of the world will be replenished. And so our grandmother, the grandest of women, continues her job and our children are happy.

So, let us bring our minds again grandchildren, you and I, together as one and let us throw our gratitude and our greetings to our grandmother the moon for continuing to give birth to our children and perhaps or great grandchildren. Grandmother moon, we your
grandchildren thank you for the light of the past night.

It is now to our creator who made the entire universe and he said to our people, the Mohawk Indian people, that Mohawk humans, you are but a child in the universe. The grandmother is older than you and more powerful than you. The old brother sun is older than you and more powerful than you. The Mississippi River is your greatgrandfather and the St. Lawrence is your uncle. You the people, the Mohawks, the Irish, the English, the Canadian, the American, the Mohawk are only but children in the big family of the universe. You must have a reverence and the great respect for your mother the earth, for your grandmother the moon, for your eldest brother the sun, and if you can do this simple little task, everything is at your fingertips for you to live in peace. But you must each day say thank you to every gift that contribute to your life and take only what you need from day to day and your life, if you follow this pattern, will be like a circle with no end. Your life will be everlasting as your children will carry on your flesh, your blood and your heartbeat.

And it is this prayer, if you like to call it, which is said before any important issue so that we will remain connected as a human civilized people in the efforts
of what the creator gave to us for our job on this planet
called Mother Earth. In this universe our first
instruction is that we must work endlessly without tiring
for the sake of our children and our next children as that
is the purpose of our birth on this planet is to do
everything so that our children will have a chance. That
is the first law of our creator, and we need every single
thing that is in the environment to do that.

When we say environment to the Mohawk, you are
actually saying God the creator, for every aspect is God's
doing. And so on behalf of our delegation, we bring these
words of prayer, these words of greetings from our nation
to yours, from our leaders, our men leaders, women leaders,
our men and women and your children, so that we may do
something fast. What the creator wants us to do is to
clean every river and every lake and every area and every
part of Mother Earth's body and that not the dollar sign be
an obstacle to that endeavor but that our children, the
newborn ones, be our goal tomorrow and tomorrow and the
next tomorrow.

Our delegation, our technical people, they have
gone to some changes in the United States' finest
university to learn about technical things, biology,
chemical levels, toxins, something that is foreign to the
Mohawk but something that we had no choice of the matter, and they will speak shortly as to what they have found and to some of their recommendations as my children and your children need some help very badly.

I want to end my sentiment of the message of the Mohawk people by a statement that one of our women made several years ago, and I hope that you will take it as a warning and as an advice for the benefit of our grandchildren. She said, Mr. President and world leaders of the whole world, when you have polluted the last river and when you have caught the last fish and when you have cut down the last tree, Mr. President and world leaders, it is too bad that then and only then will you realize that you cannot eat all the money that's in the bank.

For the sake of your children and my children and our great great-grandchildren, I ask you now, honorable men leaders and people, scientists, biologists, we better get it together quick. This is the message from the Mohawk people.

And I thank you for this time and this opportunity and I'd like that you listen to our technical young people whose philosophy along with the technical skills learned from your country have combined it to try to find a place, a safe place to put our feet. Thank you.