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Mayor/Maire/Ranatakwe'ni:io Justin Towndale

In response to the current situation regarding tariffs, the City of Cornwall, Akwesasne, and the municipalities part of the United Counties of SD&G collaborated on a video message in an attempt to promote local and national pride. I can only speak for the City of Cornwall, so I will. While well intended, it missed the opportunity to showcase our community's diversity.

The goal was to showcase our regional leadership highlighting our regional economy. In doing so, yes, we unintentionally excluded many people, specifically women and additional visible minorities. As a visible minority myself, I understand that representation matters.

Each municipality chose a local business, with some featured due to potentially being affected by tariffs. Some of these are in fact women owned businesses, either in whole, or in part. Regrettably, none of the owners were featured in this video. Yes, some did ask to not be shown.

Yes it is 2025, and yes we still make mistakes. We are human.

The human who came up with the concept, wrote the script, coordinated, attending filming, and approved the final version is a woman. She had the best of intentions and did not mean to exclude anyone. I want to say that I stand behind her and thank her for her hard work and vision.

At the end of the day, I am one of the elected representatives in the video, and I am the elected leader of the City of Cornwall. Regardless of who created the content, the buck stops with me. I have had others offer to take responsibility, but as the Mayor, I take responsibility for these oversights. I understand your disappointment and share it, as I had hoped it would instill pride in our community. I will be part of the efforts to make sure that this mistake does not repeat itself.

We are listening and we will use this as a learning opportunity. I want to thank everyone for their constructive feedback. Just please remember that there are real people behind these projects. Real people who can see the comments made, and real people who are affected by this feedback.

We value the diversity of our community. I value the diversity in our community. It is part of what makes us strong. We can and will do better.

Thank you for reading.

Justin Towndale
Mayor
City of Cornwall