

Date :

Dear Mr./ Ms. :

I am writing to request that the city of : take measures to address the importation and sale of inauthentic, internationally-made “Indigenous” art sold in galleries and gift shops. Implementing policies to protect Indigenous cultures from appropriation and marginalization would thereby facilitate Indigenous peoples’ full participation in the local arts economy, while simultaneously preserving their culture. There is a direct link between the importation of internationally-made “Indigenous” items, such as dream-catchers, masks, totems, statues, moccasins, images and other objects, and the devaluation of authentic, Indigenous art.

I urge you, in the spirit of reconciliation, to consider adopting a municipal bylaw to ban the importation and sale of inauthentic “Indigenous” art, similar to the motion currently at work in Toronto which strives to ban the sale of shark fins. Adopting such a bylaw would thereby assist in revitalizing Indigenous peoples’ participation in the local arts economy as well as protecting the intellectual and cultural property of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities and artists to reclaim control and maintain agency over how their cultures are represented.

We claim that “Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs” as stated in article 11 of UNDRIP and signed by the Government of Canada. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present, and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature. Canadian municipalities have a significant role to play in the implementation of UNDRIP, and thus we request your support in our call to action to put an end to cultural appropriation in our cities and in Canada.

Thank you,

SIGNATURE :