

Miller says blame Liberals, not SON

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Sun Times staff

People upset with the new commercial fishing agreement between the province and Saugeen Ojibway Nation should direct their anger at the Ontario government and not the native community, says MP Larry Miller.

"It wasn't the natives that had the power to make this deal. It's

the provincial Liberal government," the Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound Conservative MP said in an interview.

He called The Sun Times Monday afternoon and then followed up with an e-mailed statement intended to set the record straight that he is not in any way involved in a planned protest, which was posted to Facebook as taking place April 26 at the Owen Sound Harbour, against the new

agreement.

He went on to say that the provincial government "should be the target of any protest," as it was the Ministry of Natural Resources "who sold out" the sports fishery.

"While I totally understand the anger and frustration in the community, if groups or individuals wish to protest the agreement, they should only carry out that protest in a peaceful

manner and respecting property rights, etc.," the statement says.

Miller said he has a policy that he will table in the House of Commons local petitions — whether he agrees with them or not — if they include at least 25 signatures.

"I just think that's their democratic right and the only way to do it is through their member of Parliament," he said.

Miller said he also wanted to

make it clear that although he has heard from people who have "suggested violence" in response to the agreement, he "in no way" supports violence "as an option in this or any other matter."

The Ministry of Natural Resources announced in a news release March 11 that the province and Saugeen Ojibway Nation have signed a new five-year agreement, which will allow commercial fishing to "resume

in Owen Sound and Colpoys Bay on April 26, 2013, and continue year round over the term of the agreement."

Miller has called it a "slap in the face" to local sportsmen's groups and others who support the recreational fishing industry. He said there is "lots of room" in Georgian Bay for both sports and commercial fishing, but the two bays are not the place.

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Agreement includes annual payments to SON

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As part of the agreement, both the MNR and SON will monitor commercial fishing and recreational use in Owen Sound and Colpoys Bay and will meet in October 2013 to make sure that both commercial and recre-

ational anglers can continue to safely coexist while maintaining a sustainable fishery.

The agreement also includes an \$850,000 payment over five years to SON, which an MNR spokeswoman said will be spent ensuring effective governance, setting safe harvest levels

ensuring compliance with the agreement, collaborating on effective public communication, review of stocking programs potentially affecting the waters defined in the fishing agreement, economic benefits and capacity for SON.

The agreement covers waters

surrounding the Bruce Peninsula from Point Clark in the main basin of Lake Huron to the international border and around the Bruce Peninsula into Georgian Bay to Craigeith. This area is recognized by SON as its traditional waters