



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS



Manitoba
Keewatinowi
Okimakanak Inc.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Manitoba First Nations urge the Prime Minister to address underlying issues that have led to the current crisis situation with First Nations

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba - The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) and Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) continue to offer their support to the Wet'suwet'en Nation, the Mohawks of Tyendinega, the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake, and stand in solidarity with all organizers and allies involved in the many political actions taking place across the country in support of First Nations rights and in protection of Mother Earth.

AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas says, "the First Nations of Manitoba strongly urge Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to meet with the Hereditary Chiefs of the Wet'suwet'en Nation in order to peacefully resolve the immediate crisis and work toward long-term solutions to colonial and historic injustices committed against all First Nations in the name of resource extraction and corporate greed. These constitutional, legal, and moral issues will not go away until Canada makes courageous and profound efforts to follow Supreme Court Decisions on First Nations title and rights."

"In Manitoba, we have seen several acts of solidarity in support of First Nations title and rights, including the occupation of Minister's offices, rail blockades, and numerous marches and protests taking place in the streets of Winnipeg," said Grand Chief Dumas. "We want the Prime Minister to make a true and meaningful effort to resolve the immediate situation before it spirals out of control across the country. I was disappointed to listen to the Prime Minister's news conference and his comments in the House of Commons where he and the 'incident response team' dramatically shifted strategy from one of patience and dialogue to one of violence and the use of police force. His comments on the lack of 'good will on behalf of First Nations' and how the 'onus' is now on the First Nations Leadership to come to the table do not help and, in fact, inflame an already volatile situation. If the Prime Minister is going to militarize the provincial police and the RCMP in reaction to First Nations political actions, allow police invasion of First Nations lands, and ignore First Nations laws granted by the Creator and established through a long history of political and societal organization, he and Canada should be prepared for further unrest or worse. AMC and the Manitoba First Nations will work to ensure that people in our region have the facts so that they can make informed decisions. I acknowledge the Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services, for his efforts at de-escalation and dialogue with the Mohawks of Tyenidega. Again, I urge the Prime Minister to support his Minister and work to de-escalate and resolve the immediate situation down East and in the West through diplomacy," stated Grand Chief Arlen Dumas.

MKO Grand Chief Garrison Settee states, "AMC and MKO both condemn the federal negligence and lack of leadership from the federal Government, which has resulted in a range of increased tensions from

confrontations and arrests, to hostilities and racist empowerment and abuse directed to First Nations in mainstream media and over social media networks. The onus is on Canada to show leadership and good will for addressing the immediate crisis and working with the First Nations leadership in Manitoba and across Canada for just and lasting resolution and redress to the historic and contemporary wrongs committed against First Nations.”

“In this time of reconciliation, the Prime Minister has the perfect opportunity to put his words into action by respectfully resolving this issue. The current situation only serves to further divide Canadians and further perpetuates the racism that we encounter today. Facts are needed to be brought forward, and people need to be properly informed. We call upon our allies to help inform people of the issues surrounding the protests of the Hereditary Chiefs opposition to the proposed Coastal GasLink project,” concluded Grand Chief Garrison Settee.

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About the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

The AMC was formed in 1988 by the Chiefs in Manitoba to advocate on issues that commonly affect First Nations in Manitoba. AMC is an authorized representative of 62 of the 63 First Nations in Manitoba with a total of more than 151,000 First Nation citizens in the province, accounting for approximately 12 percent of the provincial population. AMC represents a diversity of Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Nehetho / Ininew (Cree), Anishininew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.