



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs  
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **AMC supports the Cree Nations in northern Manitoba against the injunction served on behalf of Manitoba Hydro**

**Treaty One Territory, Manitoba** – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) Grand Chief Arlen Dumas today is expressing solidarity and support for Treaty 5 First Nations that have set up a check-stop on provincial highway 280. The Treaty Nations set up this check-stop as a measure to limit the possible spread of COVID-19 into their Nations by workers returning to the Keeyask Hydroelectric project. This Hydro project is located within the traditional land-base of the Tataskweyak Cree Nation and affects several other First Nations across northern Manitoba. This past long weekend these Nations were served an injunction to remove this check stop.

Grand Chief Arlen Dumas says, “The Assembly stands with our First Nations in the North as they continue to protect the lives and health of their communities. It is unfortunate that Manitoba Hydro continues to manipulate and abuse regulatory and legal constructs to achieve their fiscal goals. Despite the good faith efforts of these First Nations to bring forward workable solutions, Manitoba Hydro chose to advance their agenda by contracting testing with a third-party lab not recognized by the Shared Health and not providing any oversight to ensure self-isolation requirements for its returning workers are followed.”

“The Assembly requested a meeting with the CEO of Manitoba Hydro in order to address this issue in a transparent way, but she was dismissive and instructed discussion through her prescribed underlings. Although we have been able to advocate for changes to Manitoba Hydro’s pandemic plans with the support of our own experts and the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer, Dr. Brent Roussin, all Manitobans should be alarmed that this project will move forward with bringing in workers from outside our province and even some from the United States, despite the state of emergencies the province and First Nations have instituted,” continued Grand Chief Dumas.

“All Manitobans have made great personal and professional sacrifices so that we all could collectively protect the health of our region as best as we could. Now Manitoba Hydro circumvents all of our collective efforts for their own financial gain. They will bring up to 1,200 people, the majority from out of province and around the world, right into the our current COVID-19 free North and, in turn, expose our most threatened and vulnerable populations. When the outbreak happens in the North, where will Manitoba Hydro be?” stated the Grand Chief. Grand Chief Dumas concluded, “when First Nations protect First Nations, we ultimately protect everyone.”

Chief Betsy Kennedy of the War Lake First Nation and a member of the AMC Women’s Council continued, “During the current pandemic, we have seen the devastating effects that resource extraction projects and

man camps can have on nearby First Nations in other Treaty areas. In fact, at least two beloved Elders of other First Nations have been exposed to COVID-19 as a result of resource extraction projects and, tragically, have lost their lives after succumbing to the effects of the novel coronavirus.” Chief Kennedy concluded, “we will not allow this to happen to our Elders. Injunctions and other legal fictions will not stop us as leaders from doing what we must do, and that is protecting our peoples who are in turn protectors of our sacred lands, waters and air.”

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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), Anishinew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.