



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
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AMC responds to release of Manitoba provincial budget

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) Grand Chief Arlen Dumas is expressing concern about the lack of First Nations investments contained within yesterday’s provincial budget. Manitoba Finance Minister, Scott Fielding unveiled Budget 2020, as a “way of moving Manitoba forward and building a brighter future for all Manitobans.” The AMC disagrees with this portrayal.

Grand Chiefs Arlen Dumas says, “First Nations live in Manitoba as well. This budget does not do a lot for individual First Nations or for our collective First Nation organizations that will move us forward. I understand the provincial budget is being unveiled during precarious and unprecedented times for Manitoba with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and that there are special measures and investments that must be made by the provincial Crown to address the pandemic. I acknowledge Manitoba and the Premier for these measures, including the emergency supplementary budget document for COVID-19. First Nations are working with the Province as we collectively navigate this health crisis and mitigate to reduce the economic impacts. However, this does not preclude specific investments for First Nations in Manitoba, given the transfer payments Manitoba receives from Ottawa and the fiscal benefits Manitoba has realized for decades through the Natural Resources Transfer Act. The AMC acknowledges the \$500 hundred thousand investment for mineral exploration and mining partnerships with First Nations, which may contribute to economic development.”

Grand Chief Dumas continued, “we see other provincial governments making meaningful investments, in the billions of dollars, in First Nations in the form of establishing First Nations power authorities and connecting First Nations to hydro power grids, in urban housing for off-reserve membership, and billion dollar budgets for First Nations participation in the oil and gas sector. We also see our relatives across the country making bi-lateral agreements on gaming, education, and resource revenue sharing. Yet, here we are in Manitoba as First Nations making do with very minimal investments.”

Grand Chief concluded, “Budget 2020 is yet another example of lost opportunity to maximize the potential of First Nations to participate in the Manitoba economy through strategic investments in children and youth, through investments in reconciliation and through investments in infrastructure. The lack of foresight underpinning this budget shows that we still have a lot of work to do in this province to achieve economic reconciliation.”

The budget was to be tabled last week in the legislature, but was delayed by the NDP because they are of the opinion that it contained several pieces of legislation that would have the potential to negatively affect many sectors, including Health and Education.

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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.