



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 4, 2020

AMC disagrees with Canada's process for awarding third-party contracts for First Nations in Manitoba

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) Grand Chief Arlen Dumas today is expressing concerns with the unilateral processes Indigenous and Northern Affairs (ISC) and the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch continue to utilize in suppressing First Nations enterprise and ignoring their own procurement policies, with the most recent example of this being the awarding of a recent contract for construction of a field hospital located in Mathias Colomb First Nation. This temporary field hospital, which will be built by a non-First Nations company based in Newfoundland Labrador, is intended to treat and contain potential COVID-19 cases within the Nation should it spread to the northern Treaty territories of Manitoba.

“While the AMC supports all locally determined initiatives that benefit the well-being of First Nations citizens in Manitoba, including temporary COVID-19 mitigation efforts, we were blindsided by media reports describing the contract,” said Grand Chief Dumas. “We were surprised to learn of this tendering process through the media, given that Manitoba Chiefs and I are on regular teleconference call meetings with both the ISC Regional Director General, and the FNIHB Regional Executive Officer. Neither of Canada’s regional representatives mentioned this process. First Nations in Manitoba, as well as First Nations enterprise and First Nations-owned construction companies, could have easily built this project through a joint venture under federal procurement policies and according to standards.”

“This is yet another example of the lack of respect for First Nations in Manitoba as demonstrated by the unilateral awarding of this contract by the central government in Ottawa. And this was done while the federal government is requesting proposals for ‘shovel ready’ infrastructure projects through Minister McKenna’s department, to stimulate the economy as a way of recovering from the pandemic.”

“I call on the federal government to adhere to its Indigenous procurement policies and on Infrastructure Canada to work with the First Nations in Manitoba on all regional health, broadband, energy, and education infrastructure projects. This joint infrastructure work, whether temporary or permanent, is especially critical as we recover from the pandemic.”

“Finally, I urge Ottawa to speak directly with the First Nations rights holders and their regional political representatives on all temporary and permanent infrastructure initiatives that follows ISC’s own current strategic plan that will transfer control of services to First Nations partners, champion a culturally appropriate department, and transform ISC’s practices so that First Nations do not get blindsided by these types of decisions again,” concluded Grand Chief Dumas.

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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.