



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

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Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs frustrated with federal government delay tactics for northern rail line repairs

TREATY ONE TERRITORY, MB _ The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs' Grand Chief Arlen Dumas worries that the recent move by the federal government to pursue legal action against Omnitrax could jeopardize the purchase plan of the port and the rail line by the consortium.

"This flies in the face of all the good work that has been done so far," said Dumas.

There is a plan in place to purchase the port and rail line but the federal government has slowed that process down by threatening legal action against Omnitrax to settle the repairs of the rail line.

"I see this as a delay tactic," said Dumas.

The federal government has said they would support the people along the rail line. But now they want to seek repayment of \$18.8 million — the amount it contributed to the Hudson Bay Railway line in 2008 — if Omnitrax does not repair the line within 30 days from the date of October 13. The rail line to Churchill was damaged in 2016 during spring flooding.

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs understands the federal government has a contract with Omnitrax but what we are asking is for the government to consider the needs of the people in the communities.

"If the government decides to pursue legal action against Omnitrax, it is forcing the communities serviced by the rail line to become fly-in communities if the line doesn't get fixed," said Dumas.

"I believe that Omnitrax is also using this as an excuse to not fix the lines, which further punishes our people living along the rail line," he said, expressing his frustrations with Omnitrax as well.

"I would like to apologize to the people along the rail line that we still have other interests deciding when we can eat and when we can travel and that our governments still refuse to help," said the Grand Chief.

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 63 of the 64 First Nations in Manitoba with a total of more than 151,000 First Nation citizens in Manitoba accounting for approximately 12 per cent of the provincial population. AMC represents a diversity of Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Nehetho (Cree), Oji-Cree, Dene and Dakota people and traditions.

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