



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 2, 2020

AMC acknowledges federal efforts to lift boil water advisories on-reserve

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) issues this press release in response to the statement today by Indigenous Services Minister, Marc Miller, that Canada’s promised target date of March 31, 2021 to end all drinking/boil water advisories on-reserve cannot be met.

Minister Miller also acknowledged at the press conference today in Ottawa, that his government knew for some time that this promise could not be kept. The Minister said that the majority of boil water advisories have been addressed since his government was elected six years ago. However, as of today there are still 59 long-term drinking water advisories remaining in effect in 41 First Nations across the country. Many of these First Nations will continue to be without clean drinking water during the current global pandemic, and there will be at least 12 First Nations whose citizens will continue to have their basic human right to clean drinking water denied beyond the March 31, 2021 deadline.

In Manitoba, approximately nine (9) boil water advisories have been lifted since 2015. However, as of today there are three outstanding long-term boil water advisories to be lifted for Tataskweyak Cree Nation, Wuskwi Sipihk First Nation, and Shamattawa First Nation.

AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas stated, “While I express concern that the promise to end boil water advisories by March 31, 2021 could not be kept by the Prime Minister, I also acknowledge the efforts of the federal government to date and the announced \$1.5 billion for First Nations infrastructure needs announced in the *Fall Economic Update 2020*. I further acknowledge Minister Miller’s remorseful demeanor at today’s conference and his acceptance of responsibility for this missed target. However, the current COVID-19 pandemic should not be used as an excuse to deny the basic human right to clean drinking water. It is this pandemic that makes this serious matter even more of a priority.”

Grand Chief Dumas concluded, “First Nations in Manitoba have solutions for many of the infrastructure challenges faced and I note that First Nations leadership in Manitoba has long advocated for joint efforts and the required resources for the establishment of a *Manitoba First Nations Water and Wastewater Authority* that would be mandated by and accountable to the elected First Nations leadership in Manitoba. I express empathy for those First Nations who continue to go without clean drinking water, especially amidst COVID-19, but I am encouraged by Minister Miller’s commitment to the First Nations in Manitoba as expressed in the Fall Economic Update. First Nations in Manitoba look forward to more discussions and clarity and remain ready and willing to help facilitate solutions and help the federal government keep its promises to First Nations.”

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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.