



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 1, 2022

AMC Statement on State of Emergency Declared by Multiple Manitoba First Nations

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) issues the following statement regarding the current State of Emergency declarations by Manitoba First Nations.

“This year, First Nations citizens are evacuated at alarming rates due to above-average precipitation and severely cold temperatures,” Acting Grand Chief Cornell McLean of Lake Manitoba First Nation said, “We continue to urge the government to engage with First Nations to protect our Nations, lands, and territories so that we are not existing in a perpetual state of crisis.”

Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) confirmed that 16 Manitoba First Nations had required spring flood assistance; *Peguis First Nation, Fisher River Cree Nation, Roseau River Anishinaabe First Nation, Little Grand Rapids First Nation, Sagkeeng First Nation, Pauingassi First Nation, Buffalo Point First Nation, Long Plain First Nation, Ebb and Flow First Nation, Black River First Nation, Pine Creek First Nation, Sapotaweyak Cree Nation, Kinonjeoshtegon First Nation, Lake Manitoba First Nation, Sandy Bay First Nation, and Rolling River First Nation.*

Many First Nations citizens who are required to evacuate face an uncertain future because they do not know when they will return home. They are also challenged by the associated traumas caused by being relocated to urban or unfamiliar temporary housing and the anticipated return to uncertain housing conditions. However, we are thankful for fast-acting community leaders and organizations who continually show up and help by providing mental health supports, organizing evacuations, arranging to sandbag, checking in on First Nations citizens, and doing whatever is necessary to ensure safety.

The Southeast Resource Development Council (SERDC) Executive Director Doug Mercer said, “SERDC is at the ready with support for Pauingassi First Nation in their current state of emergency.” As of Wednesday June 1, four families (18 people in total) had been referred to the Southeast Wellness Lodge for evacuation, with one already on-site. “Members of the SERDC advisory and health services teams work together to provide emergency response resources directly to Pauingassi Chief and Council and closely monitor the situation as it develops.”

Earlier this month, the Province of Manitoba announced it is investing \$15 million in a one-time grant program that will provide municipalities with financial support for road reconstruction, rehabilitation, and preservation projects. The AMC continues to advocate for tangible community engagement strategies. First Nations have always been stewards of the land; First Nation voices must be included.

According to Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), it has invested \$80 million to protect First Nations in Manitoba from flooding and recently renewed a 1-year agreement with the Canadian Red Cross to support Manitoba First Nations in managing responses and evacuations to flooding. Though this act is much appreciated and needed, there must be investment in preventative measures instead of relying on reactive support.

“The AMC renews the call for the Province of Manitoba to engage First Nations on flood projects directly,” Acting Grand Chief Cornell McLean said. “As an act of reconciliation, we welcome the opportunity to work alongside the province to protect First Nations during flooding season better to mitigate any lasting harms.”



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For more information, please contact:

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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.