



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 29, 2022

**THE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA CHIEFS RESPONDS TO THE RECENT PASSING OF
THE VEHICLE FOR HIRE BYLAW IN CITY HALL.**

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba - The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) is pleased to issue a statement in response to the recent announcement concerning the Vehicle-for-Hire Bylaw. The Vehicle-for-Hire Bylaw, in its final deliberation, was passed unanimously in City Hall yesterday evening on April 28th, 2022.

In February 2022, the Vehicle-for-Hire Bylaw was brought forward for approval by City Council to commence on March 1st, 2022. A significant section of the Bylaw included a code of conduct that would offer vital protections for the safety of vehicle-for-hire passengers. The issue of violence and discrimination at the hands of vehicle-for-hire drivers in the taxi industry has long plagued First Nations in Manitoba.

Acting Grand Chief Cornell McLean, Lake Manitoba First Nation stated, “The AMC is aware of the tremendous work that went into bringing this Bylaw before the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works and had serious concerns after learning of a motion put forward in City Council that would undermine the intent of the bylaw, to protect citizens from the ongoing threat of harassment and abuse from taxi drivers.”

“The City of Winnipeg is often described as ground zero for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The issue of First Nations citizens being victimized when utilizing taxi services is too often underreported and has gone on for too long. The AMC, through the First Nations Family Advocate Office (FNFAO), attended City Hall on April 6, 2022, to ensure the voice of First Nations was heard on this issue. Approximately 18 First Nations women and two First Nations men attended the delegations to share their lived experiences,” continued Acting Grand Chief McLean.

It’s important to remind City Council of its commitment to honour the Indigenous Accord signed in March 2017 and to continue working with First Nation partners in the spirit of reconciliation. To ensure continued movement on this issue, Acting Grand Chief McClean sent a follow-up letter to all City Counsellors on April 19, 2022, as an important reminder of the call to action from First Nations.

“Earlier this year, when it appeared that the matter would reach a favourable outcome, we learned of a motion passed that would only seek to further delay and remove integral sections of the Bylaw. This didn’t sit well with First Nations. First Nations leadership in Manitoba have been very vocal about this issue and often empowers us to raise our voices. I truly believe that our collective efforts helped to ensure accountability and that together we made a difference, I’m so proud of all of us”, stated Cora Morgan, First Nation Family Advocate.

With this Bylaw in effect, vehicle-for-hire drivers will not only receive a \$250 fine for misconduct, but they can also be reprimanded, instructed to be re-trained, or have their licence taken away. The Police will also be able to investigate all accusations when required.

“Today is another step forward and is an important reminder that the voice of First Nations must be heard, and that First Nations must be consulted and part of decisions that directly affect our people. I would like to commend the countless First Nations who have come forward over time to call out the wrongful actions of the taxi industry and who have courageously voiced their concerns on this issue. We still have work to do in this area. Working toward establishing alternative First Nations-led transportation options is the most tangible form of action to ensure a safer space for First Nations people in Manitoba,” concluded Acting Grand Chief McLean.

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For more information, please contact:

Communications Team
Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
Email: media@manitobachiefs.com

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.