



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CHIEFS TO CREATE OWN PROCESS ON TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Chief Ross Perley, Chief Rebecca Knockwood, and Regional Vice-Chief Roger Augustine have today announced that they will not be participating in the “All-Parties Working Group on Truth and Reconciliation” that was announced by the Province on December 3, 2020. The Chiefs will instead be creating their own process to continue the work their Nations have already started on implementing the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

“Unfortunately, in light of recent events, we no longer have confidence that Minister Dunn and her government were approaching this work with the good faith and spirit of cooperation that it requires. Based on last week’s vote, it is clear the Higgs government is not interested in solutions from indigenous leaders. The working group appears to have been used as a political smoke screen. For us it’s not political, it’s personal. It impacts lives in our communities,” said Chief Ross Perley, of Neqotkuk.

The Mi’gmaq and Wolastoqiyik Chiefs recently called for Minister Dunn’s resignation, in light of her opposition to holding an Inquiry into systemic racism in New Brunswick and sense she’s more interested in conveying the views of the Premier to the Chiefs rather than advocating on behalf of the Chiefs to the Premier. The Chiefs were also concerned that the Province was attempting to use the Working Group as an alternative to an Inquiry into systemic racism in the justice system. The Working Group was not tasked with looking into systemic racism in New Brunswick, nor was it equipped to do so.

The Chiefs also recently learned through the media that Minister Dunn wrote to the federal Justice Minister in early December asking that he delay the federal legislation that is intended to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which was first proposed four and a half years ago. The Province did not consult with First Nations before sending this letter and has never discussed this legislation with First Nations leadership. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action included a call to federal and provincial governments to fully adopt and implement UNDRIP.

“The province’s attempts to delay federal legislation on UNDRIP, after five years of inaction on their own part, just show that they are not fully committed to implementing the Calls to Action.

Given that, it is hard to see how we will make progress on addressing Truth and Reconciliation.” said Regional Vice-Chief Roger Augustine.

The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was released in December 2015. It’s calls to action were directed at all sectors of society, including the federal and provincial governments. The Commissioners recently noted that while “we now have a population of people in Canada who are actively talking about reconciliation and are openly supporting it”, progress is moving too slow. Progress with the Government of New Brunswick on the Calls to Action has been almost negligible. Previous working groups were announced and not implemented or shut down by the Province.

The Province decided to issue a press release on the Working Group and set an initial meeting date without working with members of the Working Group.

“Our Nations have spent the past five years working on our own to address the TRC Calls to Action. We will now formalize this process. We will continue to work with those treaty partners that have already shown a genuine commitment to implementing the Calls to Action. Perhaps once the Province shows that they are ready to approach this in good faith, they will be invited to the table” said Chief Rebecca Knockwood of Fort Folly.

Over the coming weeks, the Chiefs will work with other Nations, their communities, and with their elders to formalize the structure of this new initiative.

Media Inquiries

Jennifer Coleman, jennifer@migmawel.org, 506-292-1241

Gillian Paul, gillian.paul@wolastoqey.ca, 506-461-1187

About MTI

Mi’gmawe’l Tplu’taqnn Incorporated is a not for profit organization created by the Mi’gmaq First Nations in New Brunswick. Its objectives include promoting and supporting: the recognition, affirmation, exercise, and implementation of the Aboriginal and Treaty rights; the right of self-determination; political, cultural, economic, educational and social development; justice and equity; wider respect and understanding; and general awareness of its member communities and their Mi’gmaq laws, rights, values, traditions, customs and practices.

About WNNB

The Wolastoqey Nation in New Brunswick provides technical advice and support to the 6 Wolastoqey Communities in New Brunswick to ensure that the constitutional duty to consult owed to the Wolastoqey is being met and Wolastoqey Aboriginal and Treaty rights are being recognized and implemented.