



PETER BALLANTYNE CREE NATION

Chief Joseph Custer Reserve #201
2300 - 10th Avenue West

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Date: February 4, 2024

To: The Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada
The Honourable Scott Moe, Premier of Saskatchewan

Subject: Open Letter from Chief Karen Bird and the Council of Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation

Dear Honourable Leaders,

We, Chief Karen Bird and the Council of Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation (PBCN), find ourselves in a position where we must directly and publicly reach out to you through this open letter. Our community, Pelican Narrows, is facing a dire crisis characterized by escalating gang violence, rampant drug abuse, and a healthcare system that is teetering on the edge of collapse. The gravity of our situation is underscored by the multiple declarations of a State of Local Emergency within a single year, a stark testament to the severity of the challenges we are confronting.

Despite our proactive efforts and the submission of a comprehensive Community Safety Proposal on November 9, 2023, the response from our federal and provincial counterparts has fallen significantly short. The absence of substantial support and funding has left our community vulnerable, forcing us to confront an intensifying crisis with insufficient resources.

The challenges we are grappling with are complex, deeply rooted in historical injustices, systemic neglect, and the harsh realities of geographical isolation. Our healthcare facility, the Angelique Canada Health Centre, is inadequately equipped and under immense strain, operating without the necessary resources to provide proper care. Our healthcare professionals are enduring extreme pressure, their efforts compounded by the logistical challenges posed by our remote location, approximately 400 kilometers northeast of Prince Albert.

The recent allegations of discrimination against our people by healthcare providers in neighboring provinces have added an intolerable strain to our already precarious situation. Such actions are not only unethical but also a violation of the most fundamental principles of healthcare and human rights.

We stand at a lynchpin moment, a critical juncture that will determine the future well-being and safety of our community. The path we choose today will have lasting implications for the residents of Pelican Narrows and our broader PBCN communities. It is a moment that



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demands decisive action, comprehensive support, and a genuine partnership between our Nation and the governments of Saskatchewan and Canada.

We urgently call upon you to address the following critical areas:

1. **Critical Staffing Requirements:** Immediate increase in nursing staff and 24-hour triage services, hiring of well-trained security personnel with intervention capabilities, and significant bolstering of mental health support.
2. **Needed Security Enhancements:** Provision of essential communication tools, specialized protective equipment, enhanced perimeter security, and upgraded surveillance systems for our health facilities.
3. **Enhanced Law Enforcement Presence:** Regular assignment of the RCMP Crime Reduction Team, increase in Community Tripartite Agreement staffing, and proactive crime prevention initiatives.
4. **Legal Framework Enforcement:** Immediate enforcement of Band Council Resolutions by the RCMP and collaboration to ensure the practicability and observance of community bylaws.
5. **Supportive Infrastructure and Services:** Provision of adequate housing for incoming staff, establishment of a detoxification center, and construction of a new fire hall with essential equipment.

The situation in Pelican Narrows is not just a local emergency; it is a national concern that calls for immediate and concerted action from all levels of government. The eyes of our ancestors, our people, and future generations are upon us, watching how we respond to this crisis. We must not fail them.

We urge you to treat this matter with the urgency and seriousness it deserves. Our community's resilience is strong, but our current circumstances require a partnership that matches our commitment to safeguarding the health, safety, and well-being of our people. We await your prompt response and are ready to engage in immediate discussions to initiate the support and actions outlined in this letter.

In the spirit of cooperation and urgent action,

Chief Karen Bird
Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation



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Cc: Council members

National Chief Cindy Woodhouse, Assembly of First Nations, Regional Chief Cameron,
Federation of Sovereign Indian Nations, and Grand Chief Hardlotte, Prince Albert Grand
Council

Minister of Indigenous Services, Minister of Public Safety, Minister of Health, Local
Members of Parliament, Local Members of the Legislative Assembly