



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

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Office of Grand Chief Garrison Settee

July 8, 2020

Mayor Colleen Smook
City of Thompson
226 Mystery Lake Road
Thompson, MB R8N 1S6

Re: Mistreatment of First Nations customers at Thompson Walmart

Dear Mayor Smook,

As the Grand Chief of the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc., my office has received complaints about the ongoing mistreatment of First Nations citizens when they are attempting to shop at the Thompson Walmart. Over the last week I have heard from customers that they have been racially profiled. In one instance, a First Nations man (who never uses alcohol) was told he cannot come into the store because he looks like someone who has been drinking. It is understandable that one would find this completely inappropriate and offensive.

As you know, our beautiful City of Thompson is a hub for Indigenous communities in Northern Manitoba. First Nations people contribute much to the economy of our city.

I believe Walmart, and Impact Security (which is a company involved in this situation), should take steps to ensure it is a welcoming space where First Nations citizens from all communities can obtain their supplies in a way that they feel respected. Customers should not have to worry about being accused of being intoxicated (or stealing) when they are simply at the store to carry out their shopping.

I have reached out to Walmart to request that they engage in a solutions-based dialogue about their plans to improve the quality of service First Nations citizens can expect to receive at Walmart. My goal is to impact immediate customer service improvements so that when citizens are travelling to Thompson to access goods not available on reserve or in the community of residence that there be an overall compliance to satisfactory customer service.

In your role as Mayor of Thompson, I am requesting that you stand with MKO in asking Walmart to engage with leadership to improve the treatment of First Nations citizens who shop at this corporation. If you would like to discuss this in greater detail, please have your staff set up a meeting with me via my assistant Clyde Flett. You can reach him by phone at (204) 390-2702 or by email at clyde.flett@mkonorth.com. Ekosani, masi cho, and miigwech.

Sincerely,

Grand Chief Garrison Settee
Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

cc: *MKO First Nations*