



## Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

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For immediate release  
January 5, 2023

### **MKO First Nations Call for Reform of Parliamentary Process to Comply with Canada's United Nations Declaration Act**

**Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB** – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) has called on the Speaker of the Senate and the Government of Canada to reform the process to review proposed legislation affecting Indigenous peoples in order to comply with Canada's *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (UN Declaration Act). MKO represents the twenty-six northern-most First Nations in Manitoba and 65,000 Treaty First Nation citizens.

MKO Vice-Chief David Monias, Chief of the Pimicikamak Cree Nation, made this call in an Opinion article published in the *Hill Times* in January 3, 2023, and in a letter to the Speaker of the Senate and federal government Ministers sent on December, 15, 2022.

“The way that the Senate and a Senate Committee rushed through consideration of Bill C-235, *An Act respecting the building of a green economy in the Prairies*, without hearing the voices of any treaty First Nations in the prairies is a violation of the UN Declaration Act,” stated Vice-Chief David Monias. “Article 19 of the United Nations Declaration calls for the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before governments adopt or implement legislative or administrative measures that may affect Indigenous peoples.”

MKO requested the opportunity to appear before the Senate Agriculture and Forestry Committee (AGFO) regarding Bill C-235 on December 14, 2022, and immediately after the bill was referred to the AGFO Committee. On December 15, 2022, the Committee confirmed receipt of MKO's request to appear while advising MKO that the Committee had concluded its consideration of the bill. On the same day, Bill C-235 was given Royal Assent and became a law of Canada without the Senate Committee hearing from MKO or any other representative of Treaty First Nations in the prairies.

“The implied acceptance by the government of this rushed process that excluded the voices of Treaty First Nations is also inconsistent with the mandate letters issued by the Prime Minister to Dan Vandal, the minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada, and Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Marc Miller,” continued MKO Vice-Chief Monias.

The UN Declaration Act requires that federal Justice Minister David Lametti must submit an Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Declaration Act to Parliament by June 21, 2023. MKO has written to the Justice Minister's senior officials to recommend that the Action Plan include reforming the Parliamentary legislative review process to comply with the UNDRIP Act.

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