



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

For immediate release
May 28, 2020

MKO Statement on the Province of Manitoba's Phase Two Re-Opening Plan

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc. is issuing this statement in response to the Province of Manitoba's announcement regarding phase two plans for re-opening the province during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Phase two becomes effective on Monday, June 1, 2020. Notable measures include allowing direct travel to Northern parks, campgrounds, cabins, lodges, and resorts while ensuring physical distancing. Other measures include increasing child-care occupancy to up to 24 children plus staffing; increasing day camp group sizes to 24; and resuming sports, arts, and cultural activities for children and adults. Full details on phase two plans are on the Province of Manitoba's website:

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/restoring/phase-two.html>

Grand Chief Garrison Settee shared the following remarks on the phase two plans:

“Manitoba residents have done a great job of following public health measures and the low case numbers of COVID-19 show that these actions have helped to flatten the curve. I commend Northern leaders and residents who have worked to prevent COVID-19 from travelling to our communities.

Opening recreation and sporting activities for children and youth will be helpful to their mental wellness. Increasing occupancy in child care facilities will help working parents and guardians. These are important steps as we slowly work to open up our economic activities.

Regarding travel to Northern Manitoba, while we support the ability of Manitoba residents to travel to Northern parks, campgrounds, resorts, lodges, and cabins, we are asking the province to continue prohibiting people from outside of the province to travel to Northern Manitoba. This will help to prevent COVID-19 from moving into our communities from COVID hotspots.

Many Northern First Nations continue to keep their borders closed, so travel to most of our communities will continue to be prohibited at this time. We look forward to ongoing dialogue with Dr. Brent Roussin as we move forward through this pandemic. All residents of the province must stay vigilant as we can fully expect to see a second wave of COVID-19 infections in Manitoba.”

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Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) is a non-profit, political advocacy organization that has represented 26 First Nation communities in Manitoba's North since 1981. The MKO represents more than 72,000 First Nations people.