



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

For immediate release
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MKO Supports Tataskweyak Cree Nation: State of Emergency Declared for Northern Manitoba Community

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) is expressing its support for the Tataskweyak Cree Nation as it declares a state of emergency today.

Grand Chief Garrison Settee said:

“I am extremely saddened to hear about the situation in Tataskweyak Cree Nation. My thoughts are with the community as they grapple with another loss of a young person due to suicide.

Children are sacred. They are the heart of our communities. I have been informed there have been nine youth who have died due to suicide in Tataskweyak over the last 14 months, along with other young people and adults attempting suicide and harming themselves. In the past two months, there have been four youth who died by suicide. This is an unimaginable loss for this community and for our entire province.

I want to send a message to the youth, and all community members, that you matter. You are important and you are loved. If you are considering harming yourself, please reach out to others for help. Suicide and harming yourself is not a solution to the problems you are facing.

Talk with a counsellor or trusted adult about solutions for what you are going through. Youth can call the Kids Help Phone 24 hours a day if you need someone to talk with. Their toll-free number is 1-800-668-6868. Youth can also text “CONNECT” to 686868 if you would prefer to talk with someone via text message.

MKO has a Mobile Crisis Response Team in Tataskweyak Cree Nation. Our professionals will do all they can to assist the young people and families who are grappling with these devastating losses. I was in the Tataskweyak last week to pay my respects to friends who lost their child to suicide. The pain of losing your child is like no other. My heart goes out to those families who are trying to cope with their losses.

Please keep Tataskweyak Cree Nation in your prayers. The community needs long-term mental wellness supports, including mental health counselling available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; a crisis drop-in centre; and a commitment to work to protect young and vulnerable people from illicit drugs and bootlegging. I will be reaching out to leadership in the federal and provincial governments to ask for support for the Tataskweyak Cree Nation.”

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For more information:

Melanie Ferris, MKO Communications
Phone: 204-612-1284

Email: melanie.ferris@mkonorth.com