



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

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MKO Commends Government of Manitoba for Decision to Not Appeal Court Ruling on Children's Special Allowance

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc. is issuing this statement in response to an announcement from the Government of Manitoba today that shared it will not appeal a recent court decision made on the Children's Special Allowance (CSA). This decision found the actions of the Government of Manitoba, in how it managed the CSA, were unconstitutional and discriminated against children in care in Manitoba.

“Given the overrepresentation of First Nations children in care in Manitoba, it is essential that the Province of Manitoba work closely and collaboratively with First Nations leadership,” stated **Grand Chief Garrison Settee**.

The CSA is federal benefit issued to federal and provincial child welfare agencies and institutions that care for children. CSA payments are meant to be used exclusively for the maintenance of the child to whom they apply. From 2006 to 2019, CSA payments were not directed to benefit children in care in Manitoba.

“On behalf of MKO, I applaud the government for its decision to *not* appeal the court ruling,” shared Grand Chief Settee. “The recent court decision made regarding the CSA has significant implications for First Nations children and youth who have been impacted by the child welfare system and denied financial supports and services by the Government of Manitoba.”

The Government of Manitoba also indicated it is establishing a collaborative table to address policy and legislative issues affecting Indigenous peoples. The table will include representation from Indigenous governments and organizations, including the MKO Child Welfare Secretariat (CWS).

“MKO welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively with the government in the spirit of reconciliation, alongside other Indigenous organizations. We look forward to addressing policy and legislative issues, including the CSA, that exist within child welfare in Manitoba,” said Grand Chief Settee.

“The MKO Chiefs have passed a number of resolutions indicating any restitution must be granted directly to the affected children to compensate them not just for the loss of benefits, but for the terrible loss of opportunities the CSA was intended to offer,” stated Grand Chief Settee.

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