



## Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

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For immediate release  
September 16, 2022

### **MKO Demands “Top Priority” for First Nation Food Hunt: Calls on Manitoba to Cancel Licenced Moose Hunting in the MKO Region**

***Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB*** – The Grand Chief of the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc. has issued the third demand in nine months to the Manitoba Premier and responsible Ministers that Manitoba recognize the constitutionally-protected right of a “top priority” of First Nations to hunt for food and to immediately cancel licenced moose hunting in the MKO region. The season for licenced moose hunting in much of the MKO region opens on September 19, 2022.

MKO Grand Chief Garrison Settee set out the demands in a further letter dated September 14, 2022, to Premier Stefanson, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development, and the Minister of Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations “that Manitoba take rights seriously and accord a top priority to the Aboriginal, Treaty, NRTA and the s. 35(1) right of MKO First Nation persons to hunt for food” by immediately cancelling all licenced moose hunting by non-Indigenous persons in the MKO region.

In MKO’s initial letter to the Premier and Ministers dated December 7, 2021, Grand Chief Settee asserted, “put simply, as it can readily be established through Traditional Knowledge and expert evidence that every single moose after conservation can be consumed for food” by First Nations. The letter also asserted that there “cannot be any licenced hunting of moose in these areas by non-Indigenous persons for the foreseeable future. Using the language of the Supreme Court, all of the moose available after conservation ‘would go to the Indians.’”

Grand Chief Settee continued, “MKO repeated our demands to take rights seriously and to provide for the First Nation ‘top priority’ in a letter dated May 30, 2022, and during a June 7, 2022, meeting with Indigenous Reconciliation Minister Dr. Alan Lagimodiere, who also was acting Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development at the time... Although Minister Lagimodiere directed provincial officials to ‘have a conversation’ with MKO about MKO’s demands, no such conversation with MKO has been initiated or requested by Manitoba,” added the MKO Grand Chief.

Attached to the MKO Grand Chief’s letter of September 14, 2022, is the legal opinion of the Manitoba Public Interest Law Center which confirms the positions taken in MKO’s written demands and concludes, “based on Supreme Court of Canada jurisprudence dating back over 30 years, we agree with MKO that ‘First Nations have a right of top priority to hunt moose for food’ and that ‘until such time as it is confirmed that the food needs of the MKO First Nation communities are met, Manitoba must ensure the Indigenous top priority.’”

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#### **For more information:**

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