



## *Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.*

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*Office of Grand Chief Garrison Settee*

June 16, 2020

Premier Brian Pallister  
204 Legislative Building  
450 Broadway  
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

### **Re: Creating space for MKO First Nations to self-govern and exercise their inherent rights**

Dear Premier Pallister,

I am writing to follow up on your letter dated June 2, 2020, in which you outlined your concerns around the issue of 27 VLT sites in Manitoba that continue to permit smoking.

On June 8, 2020, I met via teleconference with several of your Ministers to discuss this issue. During the meeting, I advised the Ministers that each First Nation is sovereign, and it is their decision on whether they wish to allow smoking in the VLT sites.

As the Grand Chief of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO), it is not my role to determine whether smoking should be permitted at VLT sites. My role is to advocate on behalf of the First Nations; I never infringe upon their ability to create their own policies. I take my direction from the First Nations leadership.

This issue is about jurisdiction, creating spaces for self-government and taking steps for the revitalization of First Nations laws and the inherent rights of the Nations for which MKO advocates. The MKO does not speak for the Nations as to their own self-determination and governance—the First Nations govern on their lands by their laws and policies as to how to handle smoking and second-hand smoke within their borders, including VLT sites. I thank you for raising this issue with us and I will endeavour to pass on your inquiry with the Chiefs that I take direction from.

First Nations are taking steps to gain more control in a multiplicity of law-making areas, such as health and child welfare, which are currently being infringed upon by provincial and federal colonial governments. The MKO seeks to create opportunities for MKO Nations to have dialogue with governments in Canada to work to restore powers to the First Nations. I hope we both agree that the Province of Manitoba needs to recognize the inherent and *Indian Act* law-making powers of First Nations.

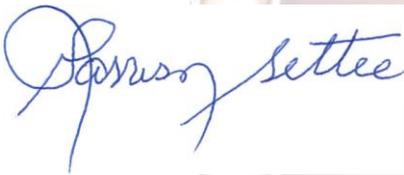
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We worked together when the MKO participated in an appeal to the Manitoba Court of Appeal in 2007 regarding this issue and legislation, supporting the space created by the province for the protection of First Nations jurisdiction over regulating smoking on First Nations lands. I hope that we continue that positive relationship and protect the law-making jurisdiction of First Nations. I encourage the province to continue to take steps to create spaces and support the work being done by First Nations.

The MKO's involvement, as noted, is to advocate for the MKO Nations. The province, and its legacy, had taken steps under the previous government to create spaces for more Indigenous law revitalization and governance over First Nations spaces on reserve. MKO wants the province to continue to do so. This is about the growth of First Nations jurisdiction and steps taken to recognize and accommodate the exercise of the inherent authorities of Nations. The MKO wishes to be part of creating a larger dialogue between the Nations, the rights-holders, and the province towards self-determination for the Nations.

I look forward to continuing to work together in the coming months in working to support First Nations in their inherent right to govern their Nations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Garrison Settee". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed over a white rectangular redaction box.

Grand Chief Garrison Settee  
Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

cc: *MKO Chiefs*  
*Grand Chief Arlen Dumas, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs*  
*Grand Chief Jerry Daniels, Southern Chiefs' Organization*  
*Honourable Eileen Clarke, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations, Manitoba*