



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

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MKO Concerned with Mistreatment of First Nations Citizens at the Thompson Walmart

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc. is raising concerns regarding the treatment of First Nations customers shopping at Walmart in Thompson.

“MKO has received several complaints about the ongoing mistreatment of First Nations citizens when they are attempting to shop at the Thompson Walmart,” said **Grand Chief Garrison Settee**. “In recent days I have heard from customers that they have been racially profiled. In one instance, a First Nations man, who never uses alcohol, was told he cannot come into the store because he looks like someone who has been drinking. Imagine being told you look as though you are intoxicated when, in fact, you do not use alcohol! It is understandable that one would find this completely inappropriate and offensive.”

Thompson is a hub for Indigenous communities in Northern Manitoba. Today First Nations plan to hold a peaceful protest to raise awareness of the concerns happening with Walmart. First Nations citizens from across Northern Manitoba spend significant amounts of money at the Walmart in Thompson.

“Walmart, and Impact Security, should take steps to ensure it is a welcoming space where First Nations citizens from all communities can obtain their supplies in a way that they feel respected,” stated Grand Chief Settee. “Indigenous peoples should not have to worry about being accused of being intoxicated when they are simply at the store to carry out their shopping.”

MKO has sent a letter to Walmart to request a meeting to engage in a solutions-based dialogue about the corporation’s plans to improve the quality of service First Nations citizens can expect to receive. MKO’s goal is to impact immediate customer service improvements so that when citizens are travelling to Thompson to access goods not available on reserve or in the community of residence that there be overall compliance to satisfactory customer service.

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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.