



Manitoba Keewatinow Okimakanak Inc.

Media Statement February 23, 2026

First Nations Demand Truth and Transparency on Moose-Licensing Decisions

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Since May, 2025, Misipawistik Cree Nation, Pimicikamak Cree Nation and MKO, have submitted multiple letters and formal FIPPA requests seeking the province's methodology, modelling, data tables, and calculations used to estimate moose populations for conservation and rights-based hunting and set the annual allowable harvest numbers for licenced hunters. The Province has not provided this information. Chiefs have been waiting well over 220 days for responses that remain outstanding or are only partially answered.

However, in its own Statement of Defence filed January 19, 2026, Manitoba states:

“....that information regarding the guidelines, methodology and calculations used to support the 2025 Decision were provided to the Plaintiff.”

MKO states clearly: this claim is false.

Letters from Chief Heidi Cook and Chief David Monias, highlighting the repeated requests for information, have been sent to the Province, the latest correspondence is included with this release for reference.

Without transparency, First Nations cannot validate, trust or reply the population estimates or harvest-rate assumptions Manitoba used to authorize licensed hunting in areas where moose populations are already vulnerable. The province's refusal to disclose this information to the First Nations undermines its legal obligations and its public commitments to shared stewardship and reconciliation.

MKO Grand Chief Garrison Settee stated:

“For Manitoba to suggest it has already provided First Nations with the science behind its moose-licensing decisions is simply not true. Our Nations have been waiting months for basic information that should have been shared at the outset. You cannot claim

shared stewardship while withholding the very data needed to protect the moose our people depend on for food, culture, and the exercise of our constitutionally protected Right of Top Priority.”

MKO stands with the Chiefs who are still waiting for clear answers.

We call on Manitoba to immediately disclose the full methodology and calculations used to issue moose-hunting licences and to engage with First Nations in good faith, government-to-government, as required under Treaty and the Northern Flood Agreement.

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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.

