



Manitoba Keewatinow Okimakanak Inc.

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MKO Raises Concerns Over Federal Changes to Impact Assessment Regulations Ahead of International Investment Summit

Treaty 1 Territory, Winnipeg, MB - Manitoba Keewatinow Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) is raising concerns regarding new federal regulatory changes that remove several major project categories from the Physical Activities Regulations under the Impact Assessment Act. As a result, these projects will no longer be subject to the IAA:

- International and interprovincial pipelines;
- International and interprovincial electrical transmission lines;
- Offshore renewable energy projects that are regulated under the CERA;
- Oil and gas pipelines and facilities in national parks and protected areas that are regulated under the CERA;
- Oil and gas facilities that are functionally integrated into a federal work or undertaking that is regulated under the CERA;
- In situ* oil sands extraction facilities with a bitumen production capacity of 2,000 m³/day or more, in a province without provincial legislation to limit greenhouse gas emissions from oil sands; and
- Fossil fuel-fired power generating facilities

MKO warns that removing these projects from the jurisdiction of the Impact Assessment Agency and the standards of the Impact Assessment Act risks weakening critical safeguards that help ensure the protection of Treaty and Constitutional rights, environmental stewardship, and meaningful consultation with First Nations. These changes were announced shortly after the federal government's engagement process on major project approvals and ahead of the upcoming Canada Investment Summit, raising concerns that regulatory reforms are being driven by efforts to attract investment rather than uphold constitutional and Treaty obligations.

"Canada cannot build investor confidence by sidelining First Nations rights," said Grand Chief Garrison Settee. "True certainty for investors comes from meaningful partnerships with First Nations, respect for Treaty rights, and obtaining Free, Prior, and Informed Consent of affected Nations. Weakening oversight and accelerating approvals may create the appearance of efficiency, but it will only increase conflict, litigation, and uncertainty."

MKO's submission to the federal government's discussion paper on major project reforms in July emphasized that governments must address the cumulative impacts of industrial development on First Nations' territories rather than further streamline processes that already fail to adequately protect

their rights and ways of life. MKO has consistently advocated that First Nations must be involved as full partners in decisions affecting their lands and waters and that governments must work collaboratively with First Nations to align regulatory frameworks with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

"First Nations are not obstacles to economic development," said Grand Chief Settee. "Our Nations want sustainable economic opportunities that benefit future generations. However, development must occur in a manner that respects our inherent rights, our Treaty relationship with the Crown, and our responsibility to protect the lands and waters that sustain our people."

Decades of resource development across northern Manitoba has already created significant cumulative impacts on First Nations territories. Further weakening project assessment processes without addressing those impacts risks compounding existing infringements on Treaty rights and undermining reconciliation efforts.

As governments prepare to welcome international investors, MKO is calling on Canada to reaffirm its commitment to Nation-to-Nation relationships by ensuring that First Nations remain central partners in all major project decisions. Economic development and First Nations rights are not competing interests. Durable investment certainty can only be achieved when projects proceed with the meaningful involvement, consent, and partnership of First Nations from the outset.

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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.

