



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

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Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Sets Urgent Priorities at AFN Annual General Assembly in Winnipeg

Treaty One Territory Winnipeg, MB - As First Nations leaders gather for the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Annual General Assembly in Winnipeg, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) is calling for immediate action on three critical priorities and demands the federal and provincial governments account for their failure to uphold past commitments to northern First Nations.

Canada's appetite for northern hydro, minerals, and energy remains insatiable. Yet when it comes to basic infrastructure, emergency support, and transportation access, First Nations like Mathias Colomb Cree Nation (MCCN) and York Factory First Nation are left stranded - literally.

1. Emergency Power for Evacuees in Pukatawagan

MKO is urging federal and provincial partners to expedite funding for the installation of backup generators in the Mathias Colomb Cree Nation. Power Safe Energy Systems is prepared to ship and install the turn-key solution within weeks, Mathias Colomb Cree Nation is prepared to bridge finance the purchase of the generators based on time-sensitive supplier considerations, but requires commitment from governments to support the purchase. MKO stresses that federal financial support is the final barrier to returning evacuees home.

2. Restoring the Lifeline to York Landing

MKO is demanding accountability from Manitoba Hydro and the Manitoba government for the closure of the ferry service between Split Lake and York Landing—an essential transportation link. Despite Premier Kinew's public commitment to provide boats and aircraft, York Factory First Nation remains stranded with only two small aluminum boats while Manitoba Hydro patrol vessels sit unused. MKO calls this a failure of duty and a dangerous neglect of northern communities.

3. Indigenous Rights in the Building Canada Act

In response to Bill C-5, MKO is advocating for a co-developed national regulatory framework that guarantees the Duty to Consult, transparent benefit-sharing, and the meaningful exercise of Indigenous rights. The current fast-track provisions under the Building Canada Act bypass critical planning phases, risking a repeat of decades of harm from unchecked development in First Nations territories.

"Any approval of 'national interest' projects must include enforceable conditions that reflect our rights and our role as decision-makers on our lands and fully uphold the Treaty promises of the Crown," said Grand Chief Garrison Settee.

MKO is calling on the federal government to work collaboratively with Indigenous leadership to ensure that infrastructure, energy, and resource development in northern Manitoba respects constitutional obligations and delivers lasting benefits to First Nations.

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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.

