



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

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“Reset the Relationship”: MKO hopeful as the Manitoba Speech from the Throne under the leadership of NDP Premier Wab Kinew promises a true Government-to-Government relationship

Treaty One Territory, Winnipeg, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc. is issuing this statement in response to the Manitoba Speech from the Throne on November 21, 2023 promising to reset the relationship with First Nations, Inuit and Metis governments.

Grand Chief Garrison Settee states: “It is with optimism and hope that I acknowledge the words of the Throne Speech that this government will “acknowledge you for who you are and what you have always been – which is governments,” translating into a true government-to-government relationship.

Of note, the changes that are set out in the Throne Speech with respect to health care, Manitoba Hydro rates, fuel costs, housing, addictions, education, economic reconciliation, climate change, land and water protection, development of a Green economy, improved airports, the Northern Gateway trade route and the Port of Churchill and the recognition of the day of Truth and Reconciliation as a statutory holiday are all causes for optimism and hope for MKO First Nations and northern Manitoba.

It is good to hear that the search for the missing women in the landfill sites of Winnipeg will now proceed.

As well, setting out a path to cooperate with the federal government on the serious threat of climate change to our collective futures and establishing a new department of environment and climate change is commendable.

Such commitments must come a willingness to work together and cooperate on the side of both the Province and MKO First Nation governments in reconciling past injustices.

As examples, past governments of this province have failed in over more than five years to designate the Brandon Residential School grave site as a Historic Site to protect the graves of our children. The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls issue has seen the discrimination and threat against LGBTQIA2S+ persons.

There is serious systemic racism that underlies the delivery of health care in the North for MKO First Nations.

Manitoba Hydro rates in the North continue to be astronomical for our MKO citizens even though

much of the hydroelectric power generated in this province, and its accompanying environmental and socio-economic impacts, are in the North. The commitment to integrate geothermal home energy is welcome news.

Yes, much work lies ahead of us but with this government, it is my hope that the work to address these injustices will now be possible.

Finally, I commend Premier Kinew on the positive and ambitious framework he has set out for this province in the coming months and years. I look forward to the work between his government and the MKO government in beginning the work to move forward in a positive direction.”

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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.