

TŜILHQOT'IN NATION URGES FIRST NATIONS CHIEFS TO VOTE AGAINST PROPOSED SETTLEMENT

The Tsilhqot'in National Government (TNG), is deeply concerned by the implications of the proposed settlement agreement between the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and Canada that seeks to address decades of discrimination against First Nations children in Canada and resolve the 2016 Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruling.

First Nations Chiefs across Canada are being asked to vote on the draft Final Settlement Agreement on the Long-term Reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program (Final Agreement) while at the Assembly of First Nations Special Assembly October 15-18. Once ratified, this agreement would remove the legal orders issued by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal that currently hold Canada accountable to discrimination against First Nations children.

The TNG does not support the Final Agreement. There are significant concerns regarding the certainty of fiscal commitments, how funding allocations and decisions are made and who makes those decisions. TNG does not view the current process as transparent or inclusive and is deeply concerned that AFN has not fully utilized or included leading experts in the field.

The rulings from the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal recognized the discrimination perpetrated against First Nations children for decades and that substantive equality requires significant federal investments into child and family program funding and infrastructure for First Nations. This agreement does not meet Tsilhqot'in standards as a final settlement and we encourage other First Nations to vote against it.

There is a path forward and it is our recommendation that negotiations continue with an expanded mandate and a new team. A revised process must use the current orders as a foundation and build upon the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decisions to achieve more. The TNG will support a new process that is transparent, inclusive, collaborative, involves leadership from across this country, and has the child and family technical experts in the room.

The TNG is the governing body for the Tsilhqot'in people. The Tsilhqot'in Nation is comprised of six communities located throughout the Tsilhqot'in (Chilcotin) territory and is the only Nation in Canada with a court declaration of Aboriginal title (Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia).

“The T̓silhqot̓in National Government will be voting against the settlement agreement proposed by AFN. The Tribunal conclusions of discrimination to our people and our children is not news to us, it’s what T̓silhqot̓in fight for and we will continue to ensure our children are given the chance they deserve in this country. Any final settlement must meet the needs of our T̓silhqot̓in children and families, this is not it. Let’s work together, be inclusive, get the experts in the room and all roll up our sleeves to help get this on track.”

—Nits’il?in (Chief) Joe Alphonse, O.B.C, LL.D. (hon.). Tribal Chair, T̓silhqot̓in National Government

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