



ATTAWAPISKAT FIRST NATION

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Statement by Attawapiskat Chief and Council on notice of Third Party intervention

ATTAWAPISKAT, ON, December 1, 2011. On November 30, 2011, an official acting on behalf of Joanne Wilkinson, Regional Director General for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada hand delivered to Chief Theresa Spence, a letter indicating that the Department was exercising its authority under the terms of the signed funding agreement with the First Nation to appoint a "Third Party Manager" to handle the affairs of the First Nation citing the health and safety of the community members. This rationale is mere political deflection as the conditions cited by the Department are present in numerous other First Nations communities, and this rationale has been used by the Department to silence us when we brought these conditions to the attention of Canadian society. There are examples across Canada where Third Party Managers are allowing similar conditions to exist while offering little or no aide to their appointed First Nation communities.

The communication of the decision to appoint a modern day Indian Agent was done by a Departmental official who interrupted a planning meeting of the communities' emergency planning team, who were in the midst of implementing a strategy to assist the people living in tent frames and shacks.

Chief Spence upon receiving the notification was incensed by actions of Aboriginal Affairs Canada, not only by interrupting a meeting of the communities' emergency team, but also by the cited reasons for the imposition of an Indian Agent. Chief Spence expressed surprise that after over a month of inaction, the Harper government has elected to blame the poorest of Canadian society rather than to offer assistance.

Chief Spence said "It is incredible that the Harper Government's decision is that instead of offering aide and assistance to Canada's First Peoples, their solution is to blame the victim, and that the community is guilty, and deserving of their fate."

Chief Spence also expressed concern about comments recently made in the House of Commons, regarding the funding levels claimed to be received by the Attawapiskat First Nation. Based on an analysis of the funding received by the First Nation, from the Department the amount received by the First Nation is in the range of \$10,000.00, per capita on an annual basis for each on Reserve member, not the \$50,000 as stated in the House and media. We have tabulated

figures from 2005 to 2011 that clearly indicates the funding received is well below poverty line in Ontario. Housing and minor capital is a mere 6.5% (\$6M over 6 years) of the \$94M received over the 6 year period. The funding received by the First Nation is not distributed to on Reserve members as individuals. It is used to provide specific services, and programs for the benefit and use of on Reserve members. This is based on statistics maintained by the Indian Registry maintained by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

The First Nation has completed all of the necessary reporting requirements of the Department, including receiving unqualified annual audits for the funds received from the Department for the past six years. All of these have been reviewed, and have been accepted by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. If the Government of Canada wishes to re-examine the audits previously accepted by the Department, the First Nation will welcome, and cooperate fully with the exercise, and the true costs to operate in a remote, northern environment will be quantified.

The taxpayers of Ontario and Canada should be made aware that the majority of the \$94M received to support the Attawapiskat First Nation over that past six years from Aboriginal Affairs does not remain or circulate in our community. The majority of these funds go to support the greater economy of Northern Ontario and Canada for goods, materials, services, contractors, legal advice and auditing services to mention a few, which in turn support urban northern communities such as Timmins, Sudbury, Sault Ste Marie, Thunder Bay, North Bay, Toronto, Kenora and Winnipeg to name a few. The majority of these firms are non Aboriginal tax-payers.

These are the very issues facing the community of Attawapiskat, and many other First Nation communities in Canada's hinterland. Chief Spence has said. "On our traditional lands, that we once shared in the past with the visitors to our land, our lands, have proven to be bountiful in natural resources, and have been a benefit to all of Ontario, and Canada, but we were left behind. In our territory, we have a world class diamond mine, the pride of the Canadian, and Ontario governments, as well as De Beers Canada. They have every right to be proud of that mine, but each party has failed to acknowledge the First Nation peoples who continue to use the land as our grandparents did."

While they reap the riches, my people shiver in cold shacks, and are becoming increasing ill, while precious diamonds from my land grace the fingers, and necklaces of Hollywood celebrities, and the mace of the Ontario Legislature.

My people deserve dignity, humane living conditions, for that our community asked for the assistance from my fellow citizens, for our simple request for human dignity, the government's decision was to impose a colonial Indian Agent.

Minister John Duncan has missed an opportunity to alter the relationships with First Nations across this country, and to renew the positive values of being a member of Canadian society.

Prime Minister Harper has forgone another opportunity to build upon the good will developed from Canada's National Apology for the abuses of the residential school system, a once in a generation opportunity. Governments of the past respected our Peoples by negotiating and honouring Treaty Agreements, this government does not have the same perspective. The United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples, of which Canada is a signatory, outlines the obligations to maintain, and ensure the position of my people.

My First Nation has received generous support from the Canadian public, and many corporate sponsors who wish to address the concerns of my community, for which we are grateful.

We have reached out to other First Nations in Ontario, and Canada, who share our concerns about the broken promises of Treaties, and lack of resource sharing for the wealth taken from our traditional Homelands. The era of not listening to the concerns of our people is at an end. This is the beginning.....

For additional information contact

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Attawapiskat First Nation
 INAC Funding by fiscal year, per capital funding level

Fiscal Year	Total \$ FY	Per Capita (Fiscal Year)	Total Admin	Total Housing	Total Education	Total Ontario Works	Total Capital Projects
2005-2006	\$ 13,824,383	\$ 9,560	\$ 2,131,205	\$ 814,413	\$ 8,291,801	\$ 878,000	\$ 1,708,964
2006-2007	\$ 17,948,132	\$ 12,412	\$ 3,525,302	\$ 1,028,600	\$ 8,932,608	\$ 828,700	\$ 3,632,923
2007-2008	\$ 15,165,735	\$ 10,240	\$ 2,424,467	\$ 1,030,412	\$ 8,590,373	\$ 856,500	\$ 2,263,983
2008-2009	\$ 15,607,985	\$ 10,201	\$ 2,450,035	\$ 1,038,902	\$ 9,598,246	\$ 1,000,966	\$ 1,519,836
2009-2010	\$ 16,471,416	\$ 10,314	\$ 2,390,064	\$ 1,094,547	\$ 8,793,004	\$ 1,204,317	\$ 2,989,484
2010-2011	\$ 15,467,070	\$ 9,077	\$ 2,824,520	\$ 1,110,557	\$ 8,843,560	\$ 912,600	\$ 1,775,833
Total	\$ 94,484,721		\$ 15,745,593	\$ 6,117,431	\$ 53,049,592	\$ 5,681,083	\$ 13,891,023
			16.7%	6.5%	56.1%	6.0%	14.7%

To be deducted

Infrastructure loan funded by Special Services (included in housing allocation above -growth related project)

\$ 2,195,000 Loan from BMO paid by
 Minor Capital funding

Net amount for housing

\$ 3,922,431 4.15%

During this time frame the band built 53 housing units
 on the reserve

Source: INAC Fiscal Year annual confirmation reports
 Population statistics based on INAC Indian On Reserve Populations Stats