



Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta

To Protect, Promote, Bring to Life, Implement, and Sustain the True Spirit and Intent of Treaty No. 8 as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the waters flow.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Chiefs Have No Input On Consultation Policy Changes

Edmonton, Alberta – September 10, 2013 – The Government of Alberta has recently released its latest installment of Consultation Policy and draft Guidelines and long standing recommendations from First Nations are still noticeably absent from the document.

“In September of 2010, the Chiefs from across Alberta got together to produce a position paper on how to improve consultation policy within this province. That position paper gave clear recommendations on ways to create a better system, yet these are not reflected in this newly released policy. It is obvious that the government has not taken any of our positions into account in the development of this policy. This has been a very frustrating process,” states Richard Kappo, Grand Chief of Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta.

“The Chiefs from across Treaty 8 [Alberta] have just met to discuss this issue and after years of trying to improve consultation for both us and Albertans, they are not happy. We [The Chiefs of Treaty 8 Alberta] want to be clear that we were not just outright rejecting previous policies but instead, we provided the government with workable alternatives, all of which were ignored.” In addition to the position paper, Grand Chief Kappo is referring to numerous letters, since 2010, that have been sent to Alberta in regards to working with them to change the consultation process into a more adequate model. These attempts have had little success in adjusting this newest policy creation.

“We are talking about the very core of our Treaty Rights, the hunting, trapping and fishing rights of our members and ensuring those rights are preserved so we can continue to practice a traditional lifestyle,” says Grand Chief Kappo before adding, “We recognize that consultation is a two way street, and we made significant efforts to try to create meaningful opportunities for consultation and get the voices of our citizens heard. Unfortunately, no one within the Government of Alberta is listening to us.”

“Many of the Nations of Treaty 8 already have their own consultation practices and policies in place, something that they put a lot of thought, effort and resources into developing. This latest policy overrides any policies First Nations already have and leaves it up to industry on whether or not they want to follow them,” states the Grand Chief.

Alberta claims to be committed to working with First Nations but First Nations are skeptical. “We have already comprehensively laid out how to make the system better, but I don’t see any of that work reflected here [in the policy and draft guidelines],” says the Grand Chief. “They will have difficulty in finding receptive Chiefs when recent history suggests that our input will have no influence on the outcome.”

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