

Dene Tha First Nation
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April 5, 2018

Dene Tha' Members

Bushe River, Chateh, Meander River

Dear Members:

Re: Update - DTFN Treaty 8 Agricultural Benefits Claim

This letter is to provide information to Dene Tha' members about the status of our specific claim that was filed on behalf of the Nation. We are pleased to report that the specific claim for agricultural benefits under Treaty 8 was accepted by Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs (CIRNA) as meeting the minimum standard and has been passed on to the Minister for consideration.

This claim is based on the Treaty 8 Adhesion that was signed, on or about June 23, 1900, by our then leadership of our Nation, and in 1950 our reserves lands were set aside. The mutual understanding under Treaty 8 was that the Crown was to provide agricultural benefits to us. This is clear from the text of the Treaty and the historical record. The Claim requests compensation for Canada's failure to live up to its promise under Treaty 8 to provide agricultural support and benefits to DTFN, such as livestock, farming tools, crop seeds and livestock feed. Canada failed to provide these benefits to us as promised in our Treaty.

We are asking Canada to make good on its outstanding promise through the payment of cash compensation to DTFN.

On March 30, 2017, the Claim was filed with the Specific Claims Branch of the Government of Canada. On September 6, 2017, the claim was found to have met the minimum standard and was passed on to the Minister of Indigenous Affairs Canada, which is now called, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs (CIRNA). DTFN was notified of this decision in a letter from Stephen Gagnon, Director of the Specific Claims Branch, dated September 19, 2017.

As of January 2018, we have received updates from the legal firm and the Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs representatives confirming that the claim process will take 3 to 3 ½ years for the Minister to accept the claim for negotiation.

On Friday, March 16, 2018 Councillors Andrea Godin, Charlie Chambaud, and I met with Minister Bennett in Edmonton and asked her on behalf of DTFN members, to consider shorter time to consider our claim for negotiation. As a follow up to our meeting with the Minister, we will submit a letter to the Minister to reiterate our request in writing. We know the claim is very important to our members. We will update you as soon as we know if our request for earlier review of the Claim has been accepted by the Minister.

With this Claim, DTFN will have the opportunity to right a longstanding wrong and ensure that our people—at long last—receive what they were promised in our Treaty. This Claim is an important step in confronting the generations of injustice we have faced and the decades of failure by Canada to live up to its Treaty promises to our Nation.

We look forward to providing you with further updates on the progress of this claim as new information is received from the office of the Minister.

Yours truly,

DENE THA' FIRST NATION


Chief James Ahnassay
Dene Tha' First Nation

Enclosure

cc: Dene Tha' First Nation – Councillors