



Carrier Sekani Tribal Council

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Open Letter: Idle No More is by the People and for the People

Dakelh Territory, Prince George, BC, Canada - Over the past two months the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council (CSTC) has been supporting the Idle No More cause. The origin of this cause comes from four aboriginal women in Saskatchewan who embodied the frustrations felt by many First Nations communities across this country. More importantly, the reason why this cause gained so much traction was that it was led by the grassroots people who said "enough is enough". Rightfully so it should be, because the momentum that carries and maintains the movement can only succeed if it is led by the grassroots people.

Moreover, to succeed and realize change can only be achieved by a mass movement. We witnessed it in the civil rights movement of the 60's where African Americans were seeking equal rights, after generations of racial inequality, and now, we are witnessing it today as people around the world are fed up with corporate greed, government mismanagement and environmental degradation that threatens our planet.

The Idle No More movement is seeking the same goals to assert First Nations rightful place in society and also to restore our rights to self-determination and self-governance.

Many Canadian citizens ask "what is Idle No More about?"

It's about a resetting of the relationship between First Nations and the federal and provincial governments. Furthermore, it's a cause that seeks to alleviate the toxic relationship between First Nations and the Crown government, and in some respects, this movement goes beyond "just a First Nation issue".

Fundamentally, the Idle No More cause, begs the question to Canadian citizens: "How can we allow a government pass legislation without debate in a democracy?" Specifically, the changes brought by Bill C- 45, to the Environmental Assessment Act allows many companies to opt out of their duty to clean up or mitigate damage to water sheds. This is out of the question.

A change in Bill C-45 that specifically affects First Nations is in the designation to Indian Reserve lands converting them to fee simple status that would allow the sale of many Indian Reserves. We could understand the concept of selling land if First Nations had vast amounts of lands; however, the reality is that many First Nations communities have been placed upon small tracts of Indian Reserve lands that most of which were never meant to be lived on permanently. Remember, Indian Reserve lands were created to segregate First Nations from white-settler

populations. They were not created for the long term economic prosperity, or even health of First Nations people. Our populations are growing and we need the opportunity to increase our reserve lands to accommodate more economic development and to increase housing for our growing populations. These are just some of the changes which are the tip of the ice berg of the 2 omnibus bills (Bill C-45 and C-38) that are both over 400 pages!

If we are going to have true sovereignty and self-determination, we can't have Bills passed by this government that impedes what was already promised to us since confederation. The process by which these Bills were passed also contravenes the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that Canada supported in 2010. Moreover, this is beyond just the passing of Bills and adequate transfer payments for social services, this is a movement for First Nations and Canadian citizen rights alike, and in many respects human rights!

The CSTC hope that today's events in Ottawa will continue a dialogue that involves First Nations, and the Crown to commit to a concrete plan that will make effective changes in our First Nations communities and also for the restoration of democracy for Canadian citizens.

In the meantime, the CSTC will continue to observe and actively support this cause.

We know our place in this movement, and will follow our grassroots people who have been starving for recognition for their rights for far too long.

IDLE NO MORE!

Sincerely,

CARRIER SEKANI TRIBAL COUNCIL

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Terry Teegee', is written over a faint, circular stamp or watermark.

Tribal Chief Terry Teegee, RPF