Whapmagoostui ∙ḋΛLd°⊃Δ

Chisasibi Cらさん

Wemindji ·ΔΓ° Γ̀

Eastmain

Waskaganish ∙ḋ`b"∆bσ°

Nemaska ⊸Г\b°

Waswanipi ዻ፞፞∙ዻ፞፞፞፞ፚለ

Ouje-Bougoumou ⊳า>dJ

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PRESS RELEASE

Québec Action Plan and Proposed Law to Protect Indigenous Culture and Language – A Chance to Do Better

Nemaska, **Eeyou Istchee** (June 23, 2022) – The Cree Nation Government acknowledges the recent announcement by Minister Ian Lafrenière of the Government's 2022-2027 Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Wellness of the First Nations and Inuit as well as of possible Québec legislation for the protection of Indigenous languages.

This legislation, to be tabled after the Québec election this fall, would complement the measures set out in the Government's *Action Plan*. The plan commits the Government to invest \$141 million over five years in six broad areas: Indigenous culture and language; Indigenous women; children and families; socio-economic conditions; health and wellness; and justice and public security.

These measures and proposed legislation are encouraging indications of the Government's intention to support the protection of Indigenous languages and culture. It is unfortunate that these measures were not included as part of the Bill 96 initiative, as their inclusion would have marked a real commitment towards reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

The announcement of funding and possible legislation to protect critical Indigenous languages and culture, while a step in the right direction, falls somewhat short of what National Indigenous Peoples Day seeks to celebrate - the survival, continued existence, and presence of Indigenous Peoples as the first inhabitants of our ancestral lands now referred to as Canada. We celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day to honour that we are still here despite all we have endured.

All 11 Indigenous Nations in Québec share in the same focus - the desire and necessity to protect our distinct Indigenous languages and identities. Apprehensions since the first draft of Bill 96 have grown into major concerns that highlight a detrimental impact to Indigenous Peoples that will de facto perpetuate the socioeconomic gap by creating barriers for education, employment, and innovation.

"As Indigenous People and as citizens of Québec, we are entitled to the same strong future as all Québécois. Indigenous groups understand the concerns and goals underlying Bill 96 to protect the French language because we share the same concerns and goals to protect our own Indigenous languages. Our languages form a critical part, not just of our own heritage and identity, but of Québec as a whole. We must redouble the critical language protection work that has been underway in many communities.



∆Aל ח∨A"רול Cree Nation Government Gouvernement de la Nation Crie

We are encouraged that the Government recognizes that it must do better. So we invite the Government to join us in this effort, and to bring forward an approach that is genuinely inclusive of Indigenous Peoples." – Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty

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