



WOLASTOQEY NATION IN NEW BRUNSWICK

Matawaskiye • Neqotkuk • Wotstak • Pilick • Sitansisk • Welamoktok

The following statement was issued today by the six chiefs of the Wolastoqey Nation in New Brunswick:

(For immediate release)

We are deeply disappointed by the Government of New Brunswick's (GNB) new policy on territorial land acknowledgment.

The policy, which forbids GNB staff from issuing territorial or title acknowledgments, is purported to be in partial response to the Wolastoqey title claim. We were forced to file a title claim because our rights continue to be ignored by GNB. Now, in response to this, the Province seeks to further trample our rights and erase us from the history of this province.

We have unceded Aboriginal title in the province of New Brunswick. That is a historical fact that the provincial government is simply going to have to come to terms with as representatives of the Crown here in New Brunswick. The Wolastoqey Nation is not seeking the return of all of the land in its traditional territory through the title claim. We made it very clear when giving the Crown notice of our claim in October 2020 that we were not looking to displace homeowners in New Brunswick.

Rather than acknowledging the historical truth of lands within New Brunswick, GNB is issuing a gag order against its employees to stop them from speaking the truth as well. It is obvious to any rational thinkers that this prohibition is disrespectful to First Nations people. But beyond the obvious, the memo is clearly a scare tactic and speaks to an underbelly of censorship that is now on full display at GNB.

We have been very vocal in recent years about the growing disrespect of First Nations people by the government led by Blaine Higgs. His disdain for our people bears out in the government's refusal to conduct a public inquiry into systemic racism, his shredding of our tax agreements, his aversion to implementing any of the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, his unilateral decision making without any Indigenous input, and his general confrontational attitude toward Nation-to-Nation negotiations.

Provincial governments across Canada continue to outpace New Brunswick on every front when it comes to Indigenous relations. Every other province in Canada understands that working with Indigenous communities will only work to further us as a society and is good for the Canadian economy. Higgs seems to be stuck in the dark ages. GNB should be finding ways to work with us, so that we can move forward on a Nation-to-Nation basis, instead of continuing to find ways to work against us. The messaging found in this new policy is such a massive step backwards in building a positive relationship.

While we expect this type of action from Blaine Higgs, we know New Brunswickers at large don't agree with this Premier's treatment of Indigenous communities. With that in mind, we encourage everyone to continue acknowledging unceded and unsurrendered territory using any wording see fit. We thank those of you that have already indicated that you will do so and look forward to working together.

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Date: October 14, 2021
To: All GNB Employees (Parts I, II, III, IV)
From: Hon. Hugh J. Flemming, Q.C., Attorney General and Minister of Justice and Public Safety
Subject: **First Nation Protocol on Acknowledging Ancestral Territory**

As you may be aware, the Government of New Brunswick (GNB) is currently involved in a number of legal actions which have been initiated by certain First Nations against the province, including a claim to ownership and title to over 60% of the Province. As a result of this litigation, legal counsel for GNB and the Office of the Attorney General has advised that GNB employees may not make or issue territorial or title acknowledgements. This includes the use of territorial acknowledgements at meetings and events, in documents, and in email signatures.

While territorial or title acknowledgments may not be issued by GNB, there may be some few situations where it is desirable to issue an ancestral acknowledgment. If such a case arises, employees must use the ancestral acknowledgment that has been approved by GNB's Office of Protocol which is shared below. Please note the absence of terms such as "unceded" or "unsurrendered". It is important that employees not deviate from the approved acknowledgment.

As GNB moves forward on its path to building a stronger partnership with First Nations in the province, I thank you for your attention to this matter.

FIRST NATION PROTOCOL ON ACKNOWLEDGING ANCESTRAL TERRITORY

"We (I) respectfully acknowledge the territory in which we gather as the ancestral homelands of the Wolastoqey, Mi'gmaq and Peskotomuhkati peoples. We strive for respectful relationships with all the peoples of this province as we search for collective healing and true reconciliation and honour this beautiful land together."

Traditional Name of the People	Adjective Form of Name	Pronunciation of Adjective Form	Older Version of Name
Wolastoqiyik	Wolastoqey	<i>Wool-as-ta-gwey</i>	Maliseet
Mi'gmaq	Mi'gmaw	<i>Meeg-mah</i>	Micmac
Peskotomuhkatiyik	Peskotomuhkati	<i>Bes-Ga-do-muh-ga-di</i>	Passamaquoddy



Hon. Hugh J. Flemming, Q.C.
Attorney General
Minister of Justice and Public Safety