



ST'ÁT'IMC

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ST'ÁT'IMC NATION CHIEFS CALL FOR MORE TRANSPARENCY AND HONESTY FROM HARPER GOVERNMENT

St'át'imc Territory - The St'át'imc Chiefs believe the Harper government needs to stop moving backwards on First Nations self-governance and work toward honesty concerning its real agenda with First Nations in Canada.

“Canada is again displaying its colonial attitude toward Indigenous People by attempting to pass Bill C27,” states Kukwpi7 Mike Leach, Chair of the St'át'imc Chiefs Council. “The federal government itself is not a shining example of transparency and accountability toward its own citizens.”

“Canada needs to address the third world conditions faced by most Indigenous People by equitably sharing revenues generated by Indigenous Peoples' lands and resources; this is the only way to address the poverty our communities are faced with.”

Since 2006, the Harper government has imposed an ideologically-driven agenda to reverse self-governance and assimilate First Nations, hoping to privatize First Nations lands, transfer responsibility for services to provincial regimes, and render the legitimately elected leadership in our communities as mere administrators of federal legislation.

First Nations have repeatedly demonstrated accountability for the funds spent in our communities by completing annual consolidated financial audits.

“Our people are very accountable by way of audit for funds spent in our communities,” says Leach.

The St'át'imc Chiefs challenge Prime Minister Harper to come to the nation-to-nation table in a sincere effort to advance the self-governance and economic development goals of the St'át'imc Nation instead of sending accountants to count pennies.

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In 2002, the Auditor General reported that First Nations are “over-burdened with reporting requirements that require... on average 168 reports (per band) a year”.

If such patriarchy and heavy-handed federal policies were truly the road to improved economic and social well-being for First Nations, results would have been apparent shortly after the introduction of the Indian Act in 1876.

In 2006, Auditor General, Sheila Fraser, again reviewed Canada’s lack of success with its on-reserve strategy and concluded “structural change” in Canada’s approach is required:

“First Nations themselves...have to be actively engaged in developing service standards and determining how the standards will be monitored and enforced.”

Instead, the Harper government chose to retrench and set out to micro-manage First Nations poverty. While the Harper government calculates the millions of dollars annually administered by Indian and Northern Affairs, the St’át’imc estimate that less than 20% of those dollars actually reach the community level where the grinding poverty persists.

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