



Assembly of First Nations Alberta Association

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PRESS STATEMENT

Regional Chief Marlene Poitras reacts to recent Provincial Government action (Municipal Election Referendums and Sept 30th Federal Statutory Holiday)

August 26, 2021 Amiskwaciwâskahikan (Edmonton, AB): With the recent news that the Alberta government is not considering legislation to observe the recently created federal National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30, 2021 as a statutory holiday, Regional Chief Poitras was compelled to respond.

“There have been too many stories in recent days of this provincial government ignoring First Nations peoples and communities in the province as of late, enough is enough. Why won’t the government step up and acknowledge this day, which directly responds to the TRC calls to action to bring more awareness to the struggles Canada’s First Peoples have gone through in dealing with colonization.

“I have also been told that the government is not taking any steps to ensure that First Nations can participate effectively in referendum items during upcoming municipal elections in regards to daylight savings and the equalization formula. While \$10 million is being funneled into municipalities to support ease of voting on these items, no booths are being set up on the Nations, who are not municipalities and do not follow the same electoral rotation as other communities.

“Instead, we are told ‘drive to the nearest community’. For some nations in Alberta this is an over 100km trek in one direction, for others, they are fly in communities and are left without any options to participate in the democratic process. This government’s actions are showing that First Nations aren’t just an afterthought, they are outright unimportant.

“This refusal to formally acknowledge the September 30th federal holiday within Alberta flies in the face of reconciliation with First Nations and shows a disdain and lack of care or respect for Alberta’s Indigenous population.

“I call upon the Government of Alberta to course correct these actions immediately, set up polling stations on referendum items on reserve and also to acknowledge the September 30, 2021 National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.”

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For more information contact:
Ann Gladue-Buffalo
(587) 588-7254 or ann@afnab.ca