

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Good day/ Bonjour

I would first like to acknowledge and thank the people on whose traditional territory we are having this meeting today. I would also like to thank the Committee for the invitation to appear before you today on Bill C-29.

I applaud the bill's objectives and I hope you will give the bill thoughtful but speedy consideration.

Reconciliation requires the collective efforts and commitment of all of us including our governments, and Bill C-29 establishes a legitimate accountable process. I will speak to you today about some of the matters and steps that will need to be considered to set the table for success.

The road to reconciliation must mean transformative changes to the status quo – legislative, regulation and policy changes over time. The Indigenous community will require the institutional infrastructure that exists for other governments to be able sit across the table as equals and engage in developing strategies to achieve reconciliation.

Reconciliation won't be achieved over night and will not be achieved through efforts in Ottawa and Provincial Capitals alone. It begins in Indigenous communities and flows to all of Canada. It will occur through engagement, discussions, and evolution. It is critical that the process be supported throughout government and that the need for adequate and stable resources be recognized through statutory funding.

Canada should engage Indigenous communities now and co-develop a co-ordinated, government wide, change management strategy to meet the challenges that will be faced in the transition to self governing Indigenous communities.

The reconciliation effort needs to respond to the need for modern-day governance and fiscal capacities at the Indigenous community level. Free Prior and Informed Consent requires that communities have this capacity. Indigenous Communities will move forward when they feel they are ready. We cannot be forced.

In pursuing their purpose to examine progress on reconciliation, the council should enlist the support of existing Indigenous organizations and Institutions in Canada that are doing important work.

For example, the First Nations Financial Management Board is providing services to over three hundred Indian Act Bands across the country. We have listened to our client's objectives and fears and responded with a project called Road Map. This project's focus is to help Indigenous people see a pathway to eliminate poverty, to a life of prosperity through good governance, access to capital, economic development and exercising increased fiscal powers. FMB has submitted materials to this committee on Road Map for your review. This is the type of support to Indigenous communities that the Council should be aware of.

I recognize the goal of this Council is not to displace the voice and responsibilities of Rights Holders. It is to support them where support is needed and to inform all on the progress being made towards reconciliation.

The preamble suggests reconciliation, in the context of this bill, encompasses a recognition of Indigenous self government, the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People, as well as the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions calls to action and I would argue, section 35 of *Constitution Act 1982*.

However, the Indigenous reality today is that existing Federal and Provincial policies, regulations, and laws that shape, define and govern the relationship between Indigenous peoples, and their governments does not give Indigenous people the recognition required to achieve Reconciliation. We must then accept as a starting point we are talking about transformative and systemic change in the relationship

I believe, there is a desire in Canada to see this change. We have started by acknowledging our history and the harms done, and admitting the current relationship is not only harmful to Indigenous people but to all Canadians. To achieve reconciliation, it is important to accept we are talking about shared decision making and the sharing of wealth. I believe, the Council will be able to follow and measure. This is what systemic and transformative change entails.

I am not sure we appreciate that reconciliation is necessary to secure Canada's future economic growth and sustain our standard of living. Sustainability standards, together with Environmental, Social and Governance reporting is impacting the ability for our economy to operate as it has in the past.

The international community is seeking to improve consideration of impacts, and are doing this through reporting, so stakeholders can evaluate which economic activity and companies are responding to the international community's concerns. This will influence investment

decisions and not only the availability of capital but also the cost of capital.

Canada is blessed with an abundance of natural resources, and Indigenous matters are a real consideration within this international movement. Bill C-29 tells the world Canada understands and is prepared to act. This is an exciting time for Canada. Let's reconcile and make our future more secure and filled with opportunity.

Thank you / Merci