



## BATTLEFORDS AGENCY TRIBAL CHIEFS INC

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July 28, 2021

Ian Martin  
Team Lead, Prairie and Northern Regional Office  
Impact Assessment Agency of Canada  
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Toronto, Ontario  
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[ian.martin@canada.ca](mailto:ian.martin@canada.ca)

Dear Mr. Martin,

The Battlefords Agency Tribal Chiefs is a Tribal Council in the Central West part of Saskatchewan, with the following members:

1. Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation
2. Moosomin First Nation
3. Saulteaux First Nation
4. Sweetgrass First Nation
5. Red Pheasant Cree Nation
6. Mosquito Grizzly Bears Head Lean Man First Nation
7. Stoney Knoll First Nation

One of our responsibilities to the member First Nations is to flag any items that in our opinion will directly and indirectly effect their rights and infringe on our culture or traditional views as a Nation. As you can witness, First Nations have become more assertive and proactive in their responses to any issues they determine impacts. In addition, defining those impacts are now the responsibility of the First Nation and always have been. Third party engagement and consultations will no longer be tolerated or accepted. I can only advise your organization of the confidence and strength from which we speak from in this day and age. However, we still believe in positive and pro-active deliberations, that are mutually beneficial and respectful.

The Diefenbaker Canal Irrigation Expansion Projects is an unknown project that is currently contracted third parties to attempt to engage and determine the final outcome. On behalf of BATC and our member First Nations, that is not going to occur. This process is an insult to our current capacity in dealing with proponents and major projects.

I have been informed there is a one-sided deadline that is imposed for today and the proponent has determined who and what types of engagement will occur. There are many ways to approach this process, but this defined process of telling First Nations "how things will happen" is an old and tired concept.

I am here to advise you that:

- We have no Project details of what is being proposed at Diefenbaker Lake other than our sacred Buffalo Stone was blown up in the name of progress and all our historical sites flooded;
- We have heard and somewhat informally contacted by a third party and individuals to talk about procurement and benefits, but no information.
- Impacts of water redistribution in all areas;
- The economic benefits of this water source and the added value that is being created in the long-term;
- The immediate economic impact to the region and all the beneficiaries;

We have not engaged, at this point any professional to assist us in any understandings other than what the Saskatchewan First Nations Centre of Excellence has been communicating, and I am even concerned that their information is indirectly being communicated to them.

As you can determine, we are very concerned and frustrated in what has occurred to this point. If the strategy of this project is to remove First Nations, my advice is that it is easier just to say it from the outset and will save time in "half talking" to each other.

As an organization, we are very open minded to positive discussions and establishing proper frameworks to begin a healthy outcome for all.

<Original signed by>

Thank you,

Neil Sasakamoose  
Battlefords Agency Tribal Chiefs

Cc:

Battlefords Agency Tribal Chiefs - Chiefs

SFNNR/COE

Minister Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada

Minister Warren Kaeding, Ministry of Environment