

12 April 2021

Dear the Honourable David Lametti, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, and the Honourable Carolyn Bennet, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations:

The undersigned Fellows of the Royal Society of Canada (RSC) and Members of the RSC's College of New Scholars, Artists, and Scientists write to urge members of parliament to support Bill C-15, An Act Respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and pass it into law before the current session of parliament concludes.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) specifies minimum standards for the "survival, dignity and well-being of Indigenous peoples." UNDRIP was adopted by the UN's General Assembly in 2007, with the noted opposition of Canada and three other member nations.^[1] In 2016 Canada officially removed its objector status and announced that it was now a full supporter of UNDRIP. The current bill before the House of Commons specifies that the Government of Canada must make all measures necessary to ensure that the laws of Canada are consistent with the UNDRIP and prepare and implement an action plan to achieve UNDRIP's objectives.^[2]

As Fellows of the RSC and Members of the RSC's College with a wide range of expertise on Canada's past and present, we are familiar with Canada's dismal record of recognizing the specific and human rights of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. We have watched the careful and deliberative process of drafting UNDRIP and borne witness to the multiple attempts to have Canada to adopt it. We have noted that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the National Inquiry on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls both urge Canada to adopt UNDRIP.

We join the signatories of the 9 March 2021 open letter and the Grand Council of the Crees/Grand Conseil des Cris in urging members of Parliament and Senators to support the timely passage of Bill C-15. Bill C-15 upholds the rights of Indigenous people under section 35 of Canada's *Constitution Act*, affirms UNDRIP as a "universal human rights instrument with application in Canadian law" and provides a framework for Canada to implement UNDRIP in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous people.

Bill C-15 is a timely and concrete symbol of Canada's commitment to recognizing First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Métis rights and to principles and practices of reconciliation. Founded in 1882, the RSC seeks to acknowledge excellence, and contributions to knowledge, and Canadian society. As RSC Fellows and members of the New College, the undersigned urge Canada's members of parliament and the senate to pass Bill C-15 and begin to fully and meaningfully implement UNDRIP.

^[1] <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>, accessed 31 March 2021.

^[2] <https://parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/43-2/bill/C-15/first-reading>, accessed 30 March 2021.

1. Marie Battiste, Fellow, University of Saskatchewan
2. Sakej Henderson, Fellow, University of Saskatchewan
3. Adele Perry, Fellow, University of Manitoba
4. Jennifer Evans, New College Member, Carleton University
5. Alain-G. Gagnon, Fellow, Université du Québec à Montréal
6. Andrew Woolford, New College Member, University of Manitoba
7. Margaret Kovach, New College Member, University of British Columbia
8. Deanna Reder, New College Member, Simon Fraser University
9. Joanna Quinn, New College Member, Western University
10. Stephen Wyatt, New College Member, Université de Moncton
11. George Dei, Fellow, University of Toronto
12. Val Napoleon, New College Member, University of Victoria
13. Yale Belanger, New College Member, University of Lethbridge
14. Vijaya Raghavan, Fellow, McGill University
15. Peter L. Twohig, New College Member, Saint Mary's University
16. Margery Fee, Fellow, University of British Columbia
17. Christl Verduyn, Fellow, Mount Allison University
18. Len Findlay, Fellow, University of Saskatchewan
19. James Walker, Fellow, University of Waterloo
20. Brenda Macdougall, New College Member, University of Ottawa
21. John Reid, Fellow, Saint Mary's University
22. Chad Gaffield, Fellow, University of Ottawa
23. Keavy Martin, New College Member, University of Alberta
24. Cynthia Milton, New College Member, University of Victoria
25. David T. McNab, Fellow, York University
26. Chantelle Richmond, New College Member, Western University
27. Isaac Luginaah, College Member, Western University
28. Jane Bailey, New College Member, University of Ottawa
29. Jin-me Yoon, Fellow, Simon Fraser University
30. John Tse, Fellow, University of Saskatchewan
31. James B. Waldram, Fellow, University of Saskatchewan
32. John Pomeroy, Fellow, University of Saskatchewan
33. Irena Creed, Fellow, University of Saskatchewan
34. Carole Gerson, Fellow, Simon Fraser University
35. Angela Lieveise, New College Member, University of Saskatchewan
36. Erika Dyck, New College Member, University of Saskatchewan
37. Peter R. Leavitt, Fellow, University of Regina
38. Gordon Pennycook, New College Member, University of Regina
39. Ian Mauro, New College Member, University of Winnipeg
40. Sandra Zilles, New College Member, University of Regina
41. Marie D'Iorio, Fellow, University of Ottawa
42. Cheryl Suzack, New College Member, University of Toronto

43. Zam Kassiri, New College Member, University of Alberta
44. Esyllt Jones, New College Member, University of Manitoba
45. Sarah Carter, Fellow, University of Alberta
46. Bryan Kolb, Fellow, University of Lethbridge
47. Beverly Lemire, Fellow, University of Alberta
48. Janice Ristock, Fellow, University of Manitoba
49. Lina Kattan, College Member, University of Calgary
50. Christine Friedenreich, Fellow, University of Calgary
51. Miodrag Belosevic, Fellow, University of Alberta
52. Gary Lopaschuk, Fellow, University of Alberta
53. Tristram Chivers, Fellow, University of Calgary
54. Allan Gordon Bell, Fellow, University of Calgary
55. Jonathan Schaeffer, Fellow, University of Alberta
56. Julie Drolet, New College Member, University of Calgary
57. Erwin Diener, Fellow, University of Alberta
58. Stephanie Borgland, New College Member, University of Calgary
59. Viola Birss, Fellow, University of Calgary
60. Ellen Judd, Fellow, University of Manitoba
61. Martin Sharp, Fellow, University of Alberta
62. Ekram Hossain, New College Member, University of Manitoba
63. Zubia Mumtaz, New College Member, University of Alberta
64. Barry C. Sanders, Fellow, University of Calgary
65. William Shotyk, Fellow, University of Alberta
66. Warren Piers, Fellow, University of Calgary
67. R. Nicholas Carleton, New College Member, University of Regina
68. Noralou Roos, Fellow, University of Manitoba
69. Ute Kothe, New College Member, University of Lethbridge
70. Laura Loewen, New College Member, University of Manitoba
71. Candace Nykiforuk, New College Member, University of Alberta
72. Jeremy McNeil, Fellow, Western University
73. Bing Chen, New College Member, Memorial University
74. Brock Fenton, Fellow, Western University
75. Louis Bernatchez, Fellow, Université Laval
76. Melvyn Goodale, Fellow, Western University
77. Warwick F. Vincent, Fellow, Université Laval
78. Gordon A. McBean, Fellow, Western University
79. Sheila Embleton, Fellow, York University