



Salt River First Nation #195

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October 26, 2017

Honourable Mary Ann Mihychuk, Chair
Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON

Via Email to INAN@parl.gc.ca

Dear Madam :

RE: Failure to Implement Salt River First Nation's Treaty Settlement Agreement

Further to your meeting in Yellowknife on October 23, I am writing to you as Chief of Salt River First Nation and on behalf of Council and all Salt River First Nation Members.

Salt River First Nation is a Dene Nation based in the Northwest Territories. We signed Treaty 8 with the Queen on July 17, 1899. On June 21, 2002, after lengthy negotiations, Salt River First Nation signed its Treaty Settlement Agreement (TSA) with Canada. Only then, 103 years after signing Treaty 8, did Salt River First Nation get the reserve land promised in Treaty 8. Only then did Salt River First Nation get compensation for 103 years of unpaid Agricultural Benefits promised in Treaty 8.

The 102,400 acres of reserve land selected under the TSA consists of 16 sites in and around the Town of Fort Smith, NWT, and 4 sites in Wood Buffalo National Park. The \$75,321,859 compensation for unpaid Agricultural Benefits is held in trust for the membership that ratified the TSA and their descendants who are members of Salt River First Nation. The rest of the money paid to Salt River First Nation under the TSA was to compensate it for negotiations costs and for the costs of surveying its own reserve lands.

While waiting for Canada to honour its Treaty promises to our ancestors Salt River First Nation did not have a land base. Lacking a land base the people were unable

to gather together and, in combination with the implementation of the residential school system and the settlement of the Town of Fort Smith in the heart of our traditional territories, there has been a grave cultural and language loss suffered by our current generation.

Recognizing the importance of a secure land base for the preservation of Salt River First Nation's culture and language, our TSA provided in Appendix C for continuing good faith negotiations between ourselves and the Crown for infrastructure and housing on our Reserve. That was a promise to negotiate funding not only for the housing necessary to enable our members together on our Reserve but also to fund sewer, power, water, roads and all the planning required for the development of our Reserve.

Salt River First Nation, in good faith signed its TSA and has, since getting its Reserve lands in 2008, attempted to implement Appendix "C", and has been faced with endless roadblocks. To date we have tried to work collaboratively instead of invoking binding Arbitration under Schedule "P" of the TSA. We have gone through collaborative negotiations. We have gone through mediation. Most recently we entered into a Terms of Reference Agreement. All to no avail.

Also, only last week we learned that Canada has failed to set aside all of the lands selected under the TSA as reserve land.

We are the only First Nation with a federal reserve north of 60 with a TSA. Our TSA entitles us to good faith negotiations resulting in funding of reserve infrastructure and housing and we believe that we have been and are being discriminated against because we are in the Northwest Territories.

We are demanding that Canada return to the negotiation table and, in good faith, negotiate the funding required to build our Reserve. The Honour of the Crown deserves no less.

Respectfully Submitted,



Chief Frieda Martselos