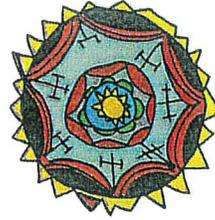


MEDIA RELEASE

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Maw-lukutijik **Saqmaq**
Assembly of Nova Scotia
Mi'kmaq Chiefs

Provincial Reductions Are Harmful and Appear Targeted

Mi'kma'ki – This week, Premier Houston and his government announced substantial cutbacks across Provincial spending. In that, 21 different Mi'kmaq-specific programs were targeted and cut.

“The Nova Scotia government’s decisions will have drastic impacts on this province,” said Chief Leroy Denny, Co-Chair of the Maw-lukutijik Saqmaq. “Programs and organizations that, for years, the Province and the Mi'kmaq have been partners on, this government decided to claw back or push away from. This is incredibly disappointing.”

Education, early childhood development, language, health, wellness, economic and community development programs have all been targets of Mi'kmaq programming cutbacks in this week’s budgetary announcement. These programs, organizations and initiatives were not merely trivial projects for the province to cut, they were equity-driven and created to address historic and persistent systemic inequalities that the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia continue to face.

Many Mi'kmaq programs, initiatives and organizations were cut 50 to 100 percent. The Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre; our health authority, Tajikeimik; many of our cultural programs and celebrations such as Treaty Day and Mi'kmaq History Month are just examples of important initiatives that lost their funding. It is becoming clear what Premier Houston’s position and priorities are, despite saying he wanted to work with the Mi'kmaq upon his election.

The Maw-lukutijik Saqmaq question how the Province can decide to defund initiatives developed to support our Nation-to-Nation relationship, yet at the same time claim the initiatives are important enough for them to remain part of these discussions.

“This government says they want Nova Scotia to flourish, succeed and grow, and then pull funding for opportunities and projects that have positively impacted us and this province,” continued Chief Denny. “Nova Scotians must demand answers and hold the government accountable on where they intend to spend your money, especially if it fails to support the people, communities and priorities that make this province who and what it is.”

The Maw-lukutijik Saqmaq call for a government-to-government meeting with Premier Houston, under the principles established through the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum.

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