



## **Mi'gmaq and Wolastoqiyik / Wəlastəkwiyyik leaders remain opposed to reopening fracking exploration**

*For immediate release - Oct. 27, 2022*

Earlier this week, the Government of New Brunswick delivered its speech from the throne to open a new session of the legislature. The speech did not respectfully reflect that it was delivered on the unceded and unsurrendered territory of the Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqey peoples, rather it adopted Higgs' government's new revisionist land acknowledgement which fails to recognize our Nations as the proper title and rights holders over these lands, and ignores the solemn promises of our Peace and Friendship Treaties.

"As the new session of the legislature begins, it is the same old song and dance from the Higgs government. As he has throughout his tenure as the leader of this province, Premier Higgs continues to undermine the Wabanaki peoples as the rights holders of the land that his government is situated on," said Chief Allan Polchies of Sitansisk First Nation.

The speech also reopened the discussion of fracking in the province. Fracking is something both the Wolastoqey and Mi'kmaw have been vehemently opposed to for more than a decade.

"The only fracking going on in New Brunswick is in the premier's head," said Chief Polchies.

The speech also opened the discussion of reopening fracking in the province in connection with the current global demand for liquified natural gas (LNG). Fracking is something both the Wolastoqey and Mi'kmaq have been vehemently opposed to and vocal about for over a decade now.

"The only plans we've heard about fracking from the provincial government have been through the media. No one from government has come to speak with us about their plans around fracking. We have told the Premier that when it comes to consultation, early engagement on a project is a good first step. We all know what can happen when a lack of consultation takes place, especially around fracking," said Chief George Ginnish of Natoaganeg.

The speech pledged to work with Indigenous and other stakeholders to transition away from coal and explore whether New Brunswick's natural gas supply could provide an alternative source of energy if developed.

"This government has not demonstrated a willingness to work with Indigenous rights holders as equal partners in a treaty relationship," said Chief Ross Perley of Negotquk. "If the Higgs

government is eager to work with Indigenous people, we have a long list of files we are ready to make good progress on.”

“Kopit Lodge is mandated to engage in consultation with the Province on behalf of Elsipogtog First Nation. The Province has not engaged in any conversations with us to date about re-opening fracking across unceded Mi’kmaq territory,” said Kenneth Francis, Speaker for Kopit Lodge. “Meaningful consultation requires early engagement on a government-to-government basis. The Province’s unilateral announcement of its intent to lift the fracking moratorium despite our Nations’ longstanding concerns is disrespectful and fails to meet this standard. We are deeply concerned that the Province has failed to acknowledge the conditions it committed to meet *before* lifting the moratorium, which includes that it work with Indigenous leadership in New Brunswick to adopt a nation-to-nation consultation process. This work should have begun before any announcement was made.”

“All we heard yesterday was a recycled and inaccurate argument that the natural gas under this unceded and unsurrendered Wabanaki land is less harmful to the environment,” said Chief Rebecca Knockwood of Amlamgog. “There is no evidence this province can develop this natural gas supply responsibly, in a way that upholds its responsibilities to the treaties.”

-30-

Media contact:

Andrew Chase,  
Communications Coordinator, MTI  
andrewchase@migmawel.org

Logan Perley,  
Wolastoqey Nation in New Brunswick  
logan.perley@wolastoqey.ca