



## Assemblée des Premières Nations Québec-Labrador

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#### **Compliance with the Firearms Registry: The AFNQL Considers that the Legault Government Is Missing the Target**

*Montréal, January 31, 2019* – On January 21, 2019, the Vice Premier and Minister of Public Safety, Geneviève Guilbault, announced measures to ease the requirements of the Quebec *Firearms Registration Act*. The AFNQL responded to Quebec's approach by denouncing the absence of any consideration of the realities experienced by First Nations' firearms owners.

Taking advantage of the holding of a regional election in recent days, where Ghislain Picard was reelected as Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL), the Chiefs of the AFNQL insisted on the need to send a clear message to the Québec Government, to the effect that it must take into account the specificities of First Nations, including any legislation or bill that completely ignores our Aboriginal and treaty rights.

The AFNQL wants to reiterate to the Québec Government the basis of its position contained in a resolution adopted by the Chiefs in 2016. "The Legault government needs to understand our everyday realities. Our populations are in a spectrum that seems totally alien to them. Paradoxically, the Québec government is listening but does not seem to hear, said Christian Awashish, Chief of the Atikamekw community of Opitciwan.

"Once again, an imposed system that costs millions but that will probably be ineffective in many respects. Our safety does not depend on this system. Our safety depends on the women and men who work daily in our communities to protect our people, so why not invest in our services? As elected officials, we have a responsibility to ensure the safety of all our members and this duty also lies on the Québec Government. It is certainly not by adding an administrative burden that the quality of life and security of our peoples will improve", lamented Chief Adrienne Jérôme of the Anishinabe First Nation of Lac Simon.

"Many of our members' way of life depends on hunting, it is a matter of subsistence for most. The application of this law may lead to undesirable conflicts and confrontations. Therefore, our people will not give up their weapons without resistance", added Chief Steeve Mathias of the Anishinabe Long Point First Nation.

“The AFNQL will always focus on the political way when it finds that some irritants can potentially have a negative impact on the relationship between the provincial government and First Nations. However, despite the position that some of our First Nations governments have adopted to protect their members from a penalty, the AFNQL is not prepared to give any direction whatsoever on compliance or non-compliance with the Act before having a political meeting with Quebec. Beyond any consideration, this Government must take note of the fact that First Nations have jurisdiction over firearms management in their territories. In this regard, the government misses the target”, concluded Ghislain Picard, Chief of the AFNQL.

### **About the AFNQL**

The Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador is the political organization regrouping 43 Chiefs of the First Nations in Quebec and Labrador. Follow us on Twitter @APNQL

- 30 -

### **Source:**

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