



Assemblée des Premières Nations Québec-Labrador

250, Place Chef Michel Laveau, bureau 201
Wendake (Québec) GOA 4V0
Tél. : 418-842-5020 • Téléc. : 418-842-2660
www.apnql-afnql.com

Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador

250, Place Chef Michel Laveau, Suite 201
Wendake, Quebec GOA 4V0
Tel.: 418-842-5020 • Fax: 418-842-2660
www.apnql-afnql.com

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS: AN OPPORTUNITY TO RENEW OUR RELATIONSHIP

Wendake, October 9, 2020 - The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) is pleased with the appointment of a new Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs and feels that this is an opportunity to renew relations that have been damaged in recent months between the government and First Nations. This appointment, however, should not relieve the Premier from his primary responsibility.

The Chief of the AFNQL, Ghislain Picard, would like to congratulate the new minister and extend his hand. "I congratulate Ian Lafrenière on his appointment and offer him my full cooperation. There are many issues, including several emergencies, that require his immediate attention. I am making myself available right now for a meeting," said Chief Picard, hoping for a meeting with the new Minister in the coming hours.

Among the issues that the Chief of the AFNQL immediately wishes to address with the new Minister are the issue of investigations into the death of Joyce Echaquan, the moose hunting in the La Vérendrye wildlife reserve, and the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Of course, all these issues have in common the issue of recognizing systemic racism.

The Premier's Responsibility

The AFNQL would like to point out, however, that the *Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones* reports to the *ministère du Conseil exécutif* and that the political relationship between the Quebec government and First Nations ultimately falls to the Premier.

"In Quebec's history, breakthroughs in relations with First Nations have always been made when the Premier took his responsibility. It is the case for example with the James Bay Convention in the 1970s with Robert Bourassa, René Lévesque's recognition of Indigenous Nation in the 1980s, and the Paix des Braves, with Bernard Landry. We are clearly at a crossroads in our relationship, and a change of Minister will not be enough to change them. Premier Legault needs to be more invested," said Chief Picard.

In closing, the AFNQL wishes to point out that it took the tragic death of Joyce Echaquan, as well as the denunciations of Indigenous women five years ago in Val d'Or, for Quebec to realize the urgency of taking action on First Nations and Inuit issues. For the honor of our sisters, we keep an eye on the government's every action. Issues affecting these women will have to be a priority in future discussions with the new minister.

About the AFNQL

The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador is the regional political organization that brings together the 43 First Nations Chiefs in Quebec and Labrador. Follow the AFNQL on Twitter @APNQL

-30-

Information:

Alain Garon, agaron@apnql.com

Communications Advisor

Cell. : 418 254-4620