



**Assemblée des Premières Nations
Québec-Labrador**

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**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION**

**BILL 96 ON THE OFFICIAL AND COMMON LANGUAGE OF QUEBEC:
THE AFNQL WILL EXERCISE CONSTANT VIGILANCE**

Wendake, May 14, 2021 - First Nations understand better than anyone the importance of preserving the language passed down to us by our parents. Our languages are the bearers of our traditions, our cultures, and our values. Some of our First Nations have lived through sad historical episodes whose asserted goal was to eradicate their culture and language. They had the resilience to survive, not without pain. Today, they are working to revive and maintain them to preserve and transmit their integrity to the younger generations. In addition to the primary question of the original languages, for several First Nations, the use of second languages, either French or English, which they have had imposed on them, is also an issue that will be the subject of reflection by the Chiefs.

The AFNQL is in a very good position to understand the merits of the linguistic initiative launched by the Government of Quebec through its Bill 96 on the official and common language of Quebec, but it warns that the survival and development of one language must never be at the expense of another language and must never be based on coercion. The ten First Nations that make up the AFNQL will respectfully examine the Quebec bill, and together, they will prepare and make known their reaction, clearly and firmly, in due course.

The option that the Chiefs' Assembly will choose to formally express its position to the Government of Quebec and to the entire Quebec population will be decisive for our living together. For a respectful relationship between us, it is fundamental that the position of First Nations on the essential question of languages be clear and well understood.

"Following the tabling of this bill, the AFNQL is committed today to a process of reflection that will allow us to maintain our achievements and to make gains in the debate that is beginning. The wisdom of our ancestors present in our languages will inspire us. While we will exercise constant vigilance, I wish the entire population concerned a respectful and productive reflection and discussion" declared Ghislain Picard, Chief of the AFNQL.

About the AFNQL

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

- 30 -

Source:

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