



For Immediate Release

Canada respects taxation 'line in the sand'

UOI OFFICES, NIPISSING FN (June 18, 2010) –The good news is that First Nations have won a hard-fought battle to retain their point-of-sale tax exemption in Ontario, says Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee.

“But our concern is that in this day and age we should be put in a situation where we are negotiating our treaty and inherent rights. We are allies of the Crown – not subjects. And we will continue to insist that Canada uphold their own court rulings that they must consult us and accommodate our interests in all matters that affect us and our traditional territories.”

Madahbee praised citizens of the 40 Anishinabek Nation communities for their steadfast resistance to government efforts to impose the new 13% Harmonized Sales tax against them effective July 1.

“It was our demonstrations of solidarity and plans for more peaceful direct action that convinced Canada they should not cross the line we drew in the sand,” said Madahbee. “My most sincere thanks to our Elders, men, women and youth warriors.”

Anishinabek and other First Nations negotiators succeeded Thursday in securing an agreement from federal Finance Minister James Flaherty that would see First Nations citizens continue to receive exemptions from paying the 8% Provincial Sales Tax on all off-reserve purchases, effective September 1, 2010. In the interim, the provincial and federal governments have promised a refund system of the PST on receipts submitted by First Nations citizens.

Under the agreement:

- First Nations citizens will be exempt at the point of sale from off-reserve purchases, upon showing their status card from September 1st onward. The two month delay is to enable retailers and governments to make the necessary changes to their systems to accommodate the exemption;
- Ontario and the federal government will be releasing in the coming days a Technical Backgrounder/Bulletin describing the scope and procedures for the First Nation point of sale exemption;
- For the months of July and August, First Nation citizens will be reimbursed the provincial portion of the HST upon the submission of receipts. Ontario will be releasing shortly a Memo/Bulletin outlining the procedures for the refund.



"I am pleased that we, as First Nations, came together in unity on this issue," says Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee. "This clearly shows that others will listen when we speak in a collective voice."

Madahbee was also appreciative of the willingness of Ontario to work with First Nations in the province on substantive issues.

"We went to the table with the federal government, and I hope this relationship continues."

But the Grand Council Chief reserved most of his praise for Anishinabek Nation citizens whose voices and actions brought the provincial and federal governments to the negotiating table on the eve of the G8 and G20 summits in the province.

"I think of the people who stood out on the highway on a cold February day in Pic Mobert; the youth from Wikwemikong who took it upon themselves to block traffic along Highway 17 Garden River First Nation's toll booth signs; Mississauga #8 First Nation's highway blockade, protests in Fort William and Red Rock; all of the First Nations along the Highway 69 corridor who slowed down traffic during the May long-weekend; Aamjiwnaang and Kettle and Stoney Point's community protests; everyone who sent out postcards, letters, e-mails, faxes."

Madahbee singled out Chief Franklin Paibomsai ("Shining Turtle") and his community of Whitefish River First Nation for their persistence in getting a long-awaited response to the HST issue from Flaherty.

"Everyone who took part should feel very proud that they made a difference in defending their rights as First Nations citizens. I am in awe of their resolve."

The Anishinabek Nation established the Union of Ontario Indians as its secretariat in 1949. The UOI is a political advocate for 40 member communities across Ontario, representing approximately 55,000 people. The Union of Ontario Indians is the oldest political organization in Ontario and can trace its roots back to the Confederacy of Three Fires, which existed long before European contact.

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