



HEAD OFFICE: ENOCH CREE NATION NO. 135 P.O. BOX 270, ENOCH AB T7X 3Y3

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 27, 2021

CONFEDERACY OF TREATY SIX LETTER TO QUEEN ON THE GOVERNOR GENERAL

(Treaty Six Territory) The Confederacy of Treaty Six sent an urgent letter to Her Majesty, the Queen regarding the situation on the vacant position that resulted from the abrupt resignation of the former Governor-General.

“We wanted to remind our treaty partner – the Crown – of our concern that at this time in the state of Canada having no representative of herself.” said Grand Chief Vernon Watchmaker. The Chief Justice of Canada can sit in for a short period, but a concern arises when legislation is enacted that might affect us – what happens if the legislation ends up before the Judge? It would be better to have a Governor-General in place as soon as possible.

The resignation of the Governor-General has raised the possibility for the Treaty Chiefs to have an input into the selection and mandate of the next Governor-General. As the representative of the Crown, the Governor-General has an important role in relation to Treaties. “We want to engage in a process whereby our concerns are heard as the last three Governor-Generals have not met with the Treaty Chiefs to hear our concerns” added Chief Watchmaker.

“When our ancestors entered into the Peace and Friendship Treaty No. 6 with the Crown, it was to ensure that the Queen’s subjects would be able to live in our territories”. It was out of this concern that we wrote directly to her Majesty as she is the head of state of Canada. As a Treaty partner, we have the right and obligation to address our concerns directly to her.

We are attaching a copy of the letter that was delivered in London today.

For further information – please contact:
Office of the Grand Chief, Okimaw Vernon Watchmaker
Gina Potts, Chief of Staff cos@treatysix.org



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24 January 2021

Her Majesty, the Queen
Buckingham Palace
London, England
SW1A 1AA

YOUR MAJESTY - MADAM

RE: GOVERNOR GENERAL OF CANADA

On the 21 of January 2021, the Governor-General announced her immediate resignation. It came as a shock to our Peoples. Our ancestors entered into Treaty in 1876 with Her Majesty the Queen in right of Great Britain and Ireland. The Peace and Friendship Treaty allowed the Queen's Subjects to live amongst our peoples using our lands to the depth of a plough. This was the request of the representative of the Crown. Our ancestors agreed. We have always lived by the words of our ancestors including your ancestors.

The Governor-Generals were in place long before creation of Canada by Imperial legislation in 1867. British North America Act section 9 sets out that the Governor-General in relation to the newly created colony of Canada: The Executive Government and Authority of and - over Canada is hereby declared to continue and be vested in the Queen. The direct link between Your Majesty and the Governor-General was not changed by the issuance of the Letters Patent by King George VI in 1947. Our reference to the history of the Governor-General relates directly to our relationship created by Treaty making.

The resignation of the Governor-General leaves us in a very unstable position. Canada is in a minority government which could fall at any time. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada as a 'stand in' does not give us comfort. Many times, our Nations have been involved in litigation that ends up at the Supreme Court. For us, we would like to see a new Governor-General appointed as soon as possible. We have one request: Treaty Peoples need to be involved in the process. We are partners with the Crown. Canada cannot go to organizations for their input. This is a violation of our Treaty with the Crown.

CONFEDERACY OF TREATY SIX FIRST NATIONS

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On behalf of the seventeen Nations within the Treaty Six, we know that it is ultimately your decision on the next Governor-General. However, we would like to be able to participate in the process. We want to have a Governor-General who will take the treaty relationship seriously and engage our Nations. The last three Governor-Generals have not engaged us despite letters from Your Majesty suggesting that we engage with your representative. We want to see the relationship repaired and built.

When the representative of Queen Victoria approached our Peoples to enter into a Peace and Friendship Treaty, our ancestors agreed in peace and friendship. We continue to hold these treaties as sacred undertakings. For our future generations, we owe them a way forward.

In peace and friendship

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Vernon Watchmaker".

Okimaw (Chief) Vernon Watchmaker
Grand Chief Confederacy of Treaty Six

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Germaine Anderson".

Chief Germaine Anderson
Beaver Lake Cree Nation

- c: Chief George Arcand, Alexander First Nation
- Chief Tony Alexis, Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation
- Chief Roger Marten, Cold Lake First Nation
- Chief William Morin, Enoch Cree Nation
- Chief Randy Ermineskin, Ermineskin Cree Nation
- Chief Greg Desjarlais, Frog Lake First Nation
- Chief Tom Houle, Goodfish Lake First Nation
- Chief Curtis Monias, Heart Lake First Nation
- Okimaw Vernon Watchmaker, Kehewin Cree Nation
- Chief Irvin Bull, Louis Bull Tribe
- Chief Leonard Standingontheroad, Montana First Nation
- Chief Ray Douglas Beaverbones, O'Chiese First Nation
- Chief Arthur Rain, Paul First Nation
- Chief Eric Shirt, Saddle Lake Cree Nation
- Chief Vern Saddleback, Samson Cree Nation
- Chief Jonathan Frencheater, Sunchild First Nation
- Prime Minister Justin Trudeau