



PRESS RELEASE

February 8, 2017

**Mi'gmaq in New Brunswick set the record straight on Taxation Agreements**

METEPENAGIAG - The Mi'gmaq Chiefs can no longer sit back and listen to the “alternative facts” perpetrated by the Independent Gas Retailers of New Brunswick (IGRONB) regarding Taxation Agreements with First Nations in New Brunswick.

“It is clear the IGRONB do not have an understanding of how government funding is provided to First Nations, and why these tax agreements were implemented in the first place,” stated Chief Bill Ward of Metepenagiag First Nation.

First Nations are chronically underfunded and must find own-source and taxation revenues to provide services to their community members that are comparable to services found off-reserve. However, this is extremely difficult especially when First Nation communities in New Brunswick are among the poorest communities in Canada.

“First Nation communities are not recipients of provincial government funding when it comes to building K to 12 schools, building small rural health centres, or building and maintaining roads,” said Chief Bill Ward. “If the independent retailers feel that First Nations should remit 100% of taxes collected on-reserve, then they must also consider that the provincial government would need to fund services for those who live on-reserve. Will they provide the capital project dollars? Will there be provincial dollars for health and education on-reserve?” asked Chief Bill Ward.

To imply that First Nations’ communities are receiving more than what’s fair and not contributing to the province is misleading. Chief Ward stated, “A recent study showed that direct spending associated with the Atlantic Indigenous Economy totaled \$458 million in New Brunswick alone. Spending by First Nations is a key economic contributor to numerous communities in our territory, including Campbellton, Dalhousie, Bathurst, Miramichi and Rexton, among others. Without the economic contribution from surrounding First Nations and their tax agreements, these communities would be in much worse shape.”

The IGRONB has provided no proof for their claim that the closures of independent gas retailers are a result of the tax agreements with First Nations, despite requests from Mi'gma'w'e'l Tplu'taqnn to provide more details. The IGRONB fails to consider other factors, including the overall decline of independent retailers across Canada, the relocation of highways, and the economic conditions in certain parts of New Brunswick. The number of retail fuel sites in

**Mi'gma'w'e'l Tplu'taqnn Incorporated**

**40 Micmac Road  
Eel Ground, NB E1V 4B1**

**Phone: 506.627.4696  
Fax: 506.455.1893**

Canada dropped from over 20,000 in 1989 to 11,916 in 2015. The increase in big box stores and large highway service centres selling gas are more likely the main contributing factor in the closures of independent gas retail stations.

The Government of New Brunswick and First Nations in New Brunswick originally signed these taxation agreements in recognition that First Nations in this province are a government that has the right to share in the revenue that is generated in New Brunswick and in their communities. Contrary to the assertions of the IGRONB, recent court decisions actually support the idea that First Nations and government should reach co-operative arrangements regarding collection of tax revenue on reserve.

There are tax agreements between provincial, federal and First Nations governments across Canada, not to mention revenue sharing for resource projects, something Mi'gmaq First Nations in New Brunswick do not currently enjoy. Chief Ward stated, "We are constantly looking for ways to create opportunities for our communities and neighboring municipalities in this province. We look forward to further discussions with the public and private sectors on how we can continue to contribute to New Brunswick's overall economic well-being."

For inquires contact:

Jennifer Coleman, Director of Policy and Operations  
Mi'gmawe'l Tplu'taqnn  
506-455-1881  
jennifer@migmawel.org