



STATEMENT FROM MTI CO-CHAIRS ON EVENTS IN NOVA SCOTIA

September 21, 2020

In 1999, the Supreme Court of Canada affirmed the Mi'gmaq, Wolastoqiyik and Peskotomuhkati have a right to fish to earn a moderate livelihood as was outlined in the Peace and Friendship Treaties. For the past 21 years, we have been trying to work with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Government of Canada to see that right properly implemented. For the past 21 years, the federal government has put in place interim measures rather than addressing the intention of the Supreme Court of Canada decision and, more importantly, the Peace and Friendship Treaties.

What is currently happening in Nova Scotia is occurring after years of the Mi'gmaq being frustrated with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and their deliberate dithering and underhanded tactics surrounding the negotiations to define a moderate livelihood and implementation of the Treaties. The Government of Canada needs to alter the mandates of its negotiators so we can come to an agreement that fully implements the rights of Indigenous people in the Atlantic Region.

Looking at the photos and videos of what is occurring in Nova Scotia is troubling and worrisome. The violence and vandalism needs to be addressed. There is clearly a need for non-indigenous fishers to understand Aboriginal and Treaty Rights. Also, there seems to be some misinformation relating to catch and conservation practices of the Mi'gmaq. We would ask the non-indigenous fishers to consider the number of licenses and the total allowable catch that the Mi'gmaq are currently fishing and ask themselves the real impact these licenses will have on the fishery. In the past we have told Canada we were willing to meet with non-indigenous fishers to have a discussion regarding Aboriginal and Treaty Rights and conservation practices. We once again make that offer.

The events in Nova Scotia will persist and spread if serious attempts are not made to have meaningful negotiations and educate individuals on the rights of Indigenous people in this Region. The Government of Canada needs to take action now.

For Media Inquiries:

Jennifer Coleman

jennifer@migmawel.org

506-292-1241

About MTI

Mi'gmawe'l Tplu'taqnn Inc. (MTI) is a not for profit organization created by the Mi'gmag First Nations in New Brunswick. Its objectives include promoting and supporting the recognition, affirmation, exercise, and implementation of the Aboriginal and Treaty rights; the right of self-determination; political, cultural, economic, educational and social development; justice and equity; wider respect and understanding; and general awareness of its member communities and their Mi'gmag laws, rights, values, traditions, customs and practices.