



ALBERTA
ABORIGINAL RELATIONS

Office of the Minister

March 24, 2011

Grand Chief Ernest Gadwa
Confederacy of Treaty Six
First Nations
204, 10310 – 176 Street
Edmonton, AB T5S 1L3

Grand Chief Charles Weaselhead
Treaty 7 Management Corporation
400, 9911 Chiila Boulevard
Tsuu T'ina, AB T2W 6H6

Grand Chief Arthur Noskey
Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta
Santa Fe Plaza
18178 – 102 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5S 1S7

Dear Grand Chief Gadwa, Grand Chief Weaselhead and Grand Chief Noskey:

This past Monday, March 21, 2011, I had the great pleasure of meeting again with my Cabinet colleagues and the Grand Chiefs and Vice-Chiefs of the three Treaty Areas under the *Protocol Agreement on Government-to-Government Relations*. In days to come, Grand Chief Charles Weaselhead and I will write more extensively on particular issues raised by individual Chiefs and discussed with Ministers. For this letter, I wish to review our main topic of discussion: Alberta's response to the consultation policy discussion papers that each Treaty Area provided to Alberta at the end of September 2010.

Alberta proposed that we jointly undertake a focused, time-limited dialogue to clarify four key matters: triggers for consultation; delegation processes and standards; consultation on strategic government initiatives; and establishing a mechanism for continuing dialogue between First Nations and Alberta once a revised policy is in place. At the meeting, I suggested that revitalizing the existing Consultation Review Sub-table would provide a valuable forum in which we might have this dialogue. I also asked that we aim to have completed discussions in time for the Premier's meeting with the Grand Chiefs, which is presently planned for late June of this year. After discussion, the Chiefs and Grand Chiefs present agreed to engage in the discussions Alberta offered and to work cooperatively on terms of reference for the renewed sub-table. I would like to see that process underway as quickly as we can manage.

In its initial work, the sub-table consisted of two representatives per Treaty Area and representatives of six Alberta consultation ministries. That seems to have worked well in supporting development of the Treaty Area position papers, and I propose we use the same format now.

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Alberta 

The primary contact for Alberta's sub-table will be Mr. Stan Rutwind, Q.C., Assistant Deputy Minister, Consultation and Land Claims, at Alberta Aboriginal Relations. I suggest that the Treaty Area Grand Chiefs agree on a lead contact for each Treaty Area in the First Nations' delegation and have those co-leads get together with Mr. Rutwind to establish the full sub-table and draft a terms of reference for the members to ratify. To ensure high quality dialogue at the sub-table, I believe that the initial meeting of the delegation contacts should occur by April 5, 2011 so that the sub-table can be constituted and a terms of reference be drafted. I expect that these co-lead activities will need a full-day meeting or even two days.

I am excited about our undertaking this process, and I believe it promises a more broadly acceptable consultation policy under which Alberta and First Nations can work more effectively together. I look forward to hearing the first results of our sub-table dialogue.

Sincerely,



Len Webber
Minister

Copy: Honourable Lloyd Snelgrove, President of the Treasury Board
Honourable Ron Liepert, Minister of Energy
Honourable Luke Ouellette, Minister of Transportation
Honourable Mel Knight, Minister of Sustainable Resource Development
Honourable Veryl Olson, QC, Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Honourable Rob Renner, Minister of Environment
Honourable Ray Danyluk, Minister of Infrastructure
Honourable Lindsay Blackett, Minister of Culture and Community Spirit
Honourable Cindy Ady, Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation
Honourable Hector Goudreau, Minister of Municipal Affairs