



For Immediate Release

Mikisew Cree First Nation Challenges Bill C-45

Fort Chipewyan, Alberta (December 14, 2012) – Chief Steve Courtoreille and the Council of Mikisew Cree First Nation (MCFN) are proud to announce their unwavering opposition to Bill C-45 (Jobs and Growth Act 2012). “We will never recognize any law which is passed by the Government of Canada which does not have our consent and any such law will not apply on our reserve lands and traditional territories”, says Chief Courtoreille. “We have not been consulted and have no option but to reject this arbitrary action on the part of Prime Minister Harper and his government.”

“Bill C-45 will trample on the rights that accrue to us as members of our First Nation.” The leadership of MCFN, like other First Nations across Canada are concerned that the Government’s omnibus budget bill includes new legislation regarding the leasing of reserve lands, First Nations education, on-reserve voting rights, and the abolishment of the Navigable Waters Protection Act, among others. “We will not sit idly by while the Prime Minister Harper and his government run rough shod over our rights” says Chief Courtoreille.

In 2005, Mikisew Cree First Nation successfully argued in front of the Supreme Court of Canada that the Canadian Government had failed to consult with MCFN when it attempted to take up lands in Wood Buffalo National Park. That case, one of an important trilogy of First Nations consultation cases in Canadian jurisprudence, firmly established that the Government must consult with First Nations when it contemplates any action, which may impact on unproven or established First Nations rights.

MCFN expects that the Government of Canada will consult the First Nation regarding any proposed changes to the Indian Act or associated legislation. “We would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Government of Canada through an open, transparent, and mutually respectful process” says the Chief. Chief Courtoreille will be attending the protest against Bill C-45 in Edmonton, Alberta on December 21. He encourages every citizen of MCFN to join him, “Bring the flags. We want every Mikisew member there.”

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