



Tłıchǫ Government

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MEDIA RELEASE

Tłıchǫ Government Files Court Challenge to Amendments to the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*

“Canada Cannot Ignore its Constitutional Promises”

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For Immediate Release

BEHCHOKǫ, NT – Grand Chief Eddie Erasmus announced today that the Tłıchǫ Government has filed a court challenge of Canada’s recently enacted amendments to the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* (“MVRMA”).

The MVRMA amendments were passed by Parliament on March 25, 2014 as part of Bill C-15, the *Northwest Territories Devolution Act*. The Tłıchǫ legal action claims that parts of the legislation, which attempt to dismantle the Wek’èezhìi Land and Water Board, breach of the Tłıchǫ Agreement and the honour of the Crown and unjustifiably infringe Tłıchǫ treaty rights.

Wek’èezhìi, which lies at the heart of the traditional territory of the Tłıchǫ, is the recognized area for land and water management set out in the Tłıchǫ Agreement. The Wek’èezhìi Land and Water Board makes land and water decisions in the region with equal representation from Tłıchǫ and Canada’s appointees. It fulfills a key constitutional promise to the Tłıchǫ within the Tłıchǫ Agreement.

“We will protect Wek’èezhìi for as long as this land shall last. We can only do that if we are decision-makers and stewards in relation to Wek’èezhìi, today and into the future. Canada cannot simply ignore its constitutional promises to our people. We won’t allow it and its truly upsetting that we are forced into the courts in order to uphold the Crown’s honour,” said Grand Chief Erasmus.

Since its creation over a decade ago, the Wek’èezhìi Land and Water Board has been recognized as a success by local communities, industry and Canada itself. It has incorporated Tłıchǫ traditional knowledge and perspectives into its decision-making and was recently awarded the 2014 Council of the Federation Excellence in Water Stewardship Award. Yet, despite its success, Canada has chosen a path that attempts to destroy this important institution, an institution that is fundamental to the Tłıchǫ Agreement.

“The Tłıchǫ Government rejects Canada’s unilateral approach,” added Grand Chief Erasmus. “We are Canada’s treaty partner. We thought the days of the government in Ottawa

thinking it 'knows best' about our lands, resources and future were over when we signed the Tłıchǫ Agreement. We won't go back to the days when outsiders made decisions about our future and that of Wek'èezhìi."

The Tłıchǫ Government is the governing authority within Tłıchǫ lands responsible for managing the rights and benefits provided under the Tłıchǫ Agreement. The Tłıchǫ Government has the power to pass and enforce its own laws, and has authority over the use, management, administration and protection of Tłıchǫ lands and renewable resources.

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