

## **Shelters**

- **Shelters in First Nations communities provide a vital place of refuge for women and children escaping violence.**
- **\$50 million was allocated to women's shelters and sexual assault centres across Canada to help with their capacity to manage or prevent a COVID outbreak in their facilities.**
- **This includes \$10 million in direct funding for 46 emergency shelters in First Nations communities and in Yukon to support Indigenous women and children fleeing violence.**
- **These new funds will provide shelters with additional capacity to manage or prevent an outbreak in their facilities.**

### **If pressed on closure of women's shelter:**

- **We are aware of the reported COVID-19 cases in a Native women's shelter in Montreal.**
- **The health and safety of community members, whether they reside on reserve or not, is a top priority for this government.**
- **The Government of Quebec is the lead in addressing the situation in Montreal and investigating potential cases.**
- **We remain committed to supporting provincial partners in responding to this outbreak.**

### **If pressed further on closure of women's shelter**

- **In 2020, ISC allocated \$150,000 to the Native women's shelter for its own activities and to support the Resilience day centre for homeless people.**
- **We will continue to offer support and address surge capacity as needed.**

## **Data Specific to Indigenous Communities**

- **First Nation, Inuit and Métis have a higher risk of being disproportionately impacted by COVID19.**
- **We recognize the value of Indigenous-led access to and analysis of accurate disaggregated data.**
- **This will support First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities in advancing culturally safe and science based approaches.**
- **Along with better access to testing, governments need to do better, more robust and routine collection of disaggregated data.**
- **We are taking active measures to address this data gap.**

### **If pressed – Larger Government Support**

- **In addition to the investment made by ISC, on April 23, the Prime Minister announced \$10M for a larger, overarching Canadian data monitoring initiative.**
- **This initiative will establish a coordinated approach to COVID-19 modeling and access to data sets, through a national network of experts.**
- **Our absolute priority is and will remain the health and safety of First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities and we are taking active measures to address this data gap.**

### **If pressed on First Nation, Inuit and Metis COVID-19 Tracking and Modelling**

- **It is crucial that we take a whole-of-government approach to slow the spread of this pandemic and to protect all Canadians.**
- **ISC is working with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis leaders, Indigenous service partners, and the Public Health Agency of Canada to support ongoing identification and monitoring of and response to COVID-19.**

- **This Indigenous-led data analysis will help to inform the response to COVID-19 in Indigenous communities.**
- **We need the help of provinces and territories to support Indigenous communities to obtain a comprehensive data picture for public health actions.**

### **Checkpoints erected by the community of Kanesatake**

- **The safety and security of Indigenous communities is of critical importance.**
- **I have been informed that the Council has erected road checkpoints to protect its community from COVID-19.**
- **In light of the Government of Quebec's reopening plan, I am aware that this situation raises concerns both inside and outside of the community.**
- **Indigenous Services Canada is working with the appropriate authorities, including the Band Council, the Government of Quebec and the Sûreté du Québec to find a fair and safe solution to this situation.**

### **Did ISC fund these checkpoints?**

- **The community of Kanesatake received funding to address the COVID-19 pandemic through the Indigenous Community Support Fund. All communities are autonomous in their management of this funding, which must be used in compliance with the laws and measures prescribed by public health authorities.**
- **Indigenous Services Canada is in discussions with the community regarding funding requests submitted under the Emergency Management Assistance Program (EMAP) to ensure that expenditures are made in accordance with the laws and measures prescribed by public health authorities.**

## **Background**

The community of Kanesatake is located on the north shore of Lake of Two Mountains, at the junction of the Ottawa River, 53 kilometers west of Montreal. The community of Kanesatake has a population of 2,626 Mohawks, of which 1,377 live on reserve.

The community has set up five checkpoints, one of which, located in the municipality of Oka on Route 344, is considered illegal by the Sûreté du Québec.

Grand Chief Simon, who said he has no intention of lifting the checkpoints until a vaccine is available, is receiving a lot of pressure from the owners of tobacco and cannabis businesses in the community as well as from the Municipality of Oka.

This is creating significant tension in the community. A formal notice has also been filed by the Municipality of Oka to force the community to remove its checkpoints.

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<b>Riding:</b>	Various	
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Stéphane Greffard	(418) 951-4047
	XXXXX	(819) ...
<b>Consulted:</b>	XXXXX	(819) ...
<b>Parliamentary:</b>	Rebecca Wong	(819) 953-9603
<b>Approved by / Approuvé par:</b>	Luc Dumont	(418) 648-3270

## **Nibinamik First Nation – Diesel Generator Failures**

- **We recognize that many First Nations face infrastructure challenges and that these challenges have been exacerbated in the pandemic period.**
- **We are aware that on May 13th, 2020, Nibinamik First Nation declared a state of emergency due to intermittent power failures of its diesel generating station.**
- **Indigenous Services Canada regional officials are in touch with the Nibinamik First Nation and are working to support the return of consistent power to the community.**

### **If Pressed on funding details (how much funding has been provided to the First Nation)**

- **Since 2016, Indigenous Services Canada has provided over \$3.4 million to repair, upgrade, and support the operations and maintenance of the generating station.**
- **In 2019-2020, ISC funded the First Nation \$900,000 to purchase two new diesel generators. These were delivered to the community this past winter via the ice road.**
- **ISC funding also covered the detailed design required for the generator installations.**

## **Background**

On May 13, 2020, Nibinamik First Nation declared a state of emergency due to intermittent failures of its diesel power generators.

Since 2016, the Department has invested over \$3.442 million to repair, upgrade, and support the operations and maintenance of the community's Diesel Generating Station. A new switchgear control system at the Diesel Generating Station was purchased, installed and commissioned in August 2018 to allow for increased generating capacity, improved operations, and decreased diesel fuel costs.

In 2019-2020, Nibinamik was approved for \$900,000 to purchase two new diesel generators including a 725 kilowatt (kw) and 545 kw unit. Both units were delivered to the remote First Nation over the 2019-2020 winter road. The detailed design for the generator installations was also funded under this project.

On May 6, 2020, BJ Tworzyanski (the engineering design consultant) issued the 90% draft design drawings for review and comment by the Project Team.

On May 14, 2020, BJ Tworzyanski (the design consultant) issued a construction cost estimate for the future installation of the two delivered generators in the amount of [redacted]. On May 14, 2020, at approximately 5 pm, Nibinamik First Nation issued a declaration of emergency, dated May 13, 2020, for the community, related to COVID-19 and community power issues in the diesel generating station (DGS).

Matawa First Nation Management submitted a draft Minor Capital Application (MCA) funding submission on the morning of May 15, 2020, to ISC Ontario Region with a request for \$1.47 million to install the (2) diesel generators. The First Nation hopes to have both new generators installed before the upcoming winter heating season. ISC has not confirmed an approved budget for the installation at this time.

Regional officials spoke with the First Nation on May 15, 2020 and May 19, 2020, and were advised that the power has been generally reliable over the past week, with some interruptions overnight. The Regional Director General for ISC Ontario Region and Nibinamik First Nation Chief and Council are in the process of scheduling a meeting.

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<b>Riding:</b>	Various	
<b>Contact Person:</b>	XXXXX	(819) ...
	XXXXX	(819) ...
<b>Consulted:</b>	XXXXX	(819) ...
<b>Parliamentary:</b>	Rebecca Wong	(819) 953-9603
<b>Approved by:</b>	XXXXX	(819) ...

## **Pine Creek First Nation Wildland Fire**

- **The safety of First Nations people and communities is our highest priority.**
- **We are working with Pine Creek First Nation to support those affected, and to begin recovery efforts as soon as possible.**
- **Wildfires remain active and are being closely monitored. All evacuees, other than those who lost their home, have returned to the community.**
- **I would like to thank the first responders who put themselves at risk to protect the community.**

### **If pressed on COVID-19 precautions for evacuees**

- **The safety of First Nations people and communities is our highest priority. This has never been more important than now.**
- **The Emergency Pandemic team in Pine Creek First Nation employed measures during the evacuation and repatriation to ensure there was minimal contact outside of household groups.**

### **If pressed on the cause of the fire**

- **The cause of the fire is under investigation by the RCMP and the provincial Office of the Fire Commissioner.**



## *If pressed on the role of the Canadian Red Cross*

- **Indigenous Services Canada has an agreement with the Canadian Red Cross to support the needs of people evacuated from Manitoba First Nations; this includes accommodation costs and evacuee benefits.**
- **The Canadian Red Cross may provide emergency food and clothing, emergency lodging, reception and information, personal services and family reunification services. Evacuees are also entitled to receive a daily allowance to offset additional costs.**

### **Background**

On May 17, 2020, a wildfire around Pine Creek First Nation led Chief Karen Batson to request a partial evacuation of up to 50 households through Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) – Manitoba Regional Office. At 9:15 PM ISC approved the evacuation and engaged the Canadian Red Cross (CRC) to support the needs of evacuees. Evacuees were provided accommodations and support from the CRC in Dauphin, Manitoba. In total 112 community members evacuated the community.

On May 18, 2020, local RCMP and provincial Conservation and Climate officials informed Pine Creek community officials that there was no longer an imminent threat to the community and evacuees were safe to return home. Value protection measures have been established on 8 homes in Pine Creek, and fire suppression efforts continue. As of May 19, 2020, 110 of 112 evacuees have returned home. Two evacuees will remain in Dauphin and continue to receive evacuee supports from the CRC. As of May 19 at 2100 CDT, fires remain active and are being closely monitored. No residents have presented to the Health Centre with respiratory-related health issues.

Manitoba Hydro indicated there was no loss of power to the community and that repairs to damaged poles will be scheduled within the next few days. Manitoba Office of the Fire Commissioner is supporting local response efforts and investigating the cause of the fire.

Pine Creek First Nation is located approximately 437 kilometers northwest of Winnipeg and 115 kilometers north of Dauphin. The First Nation has an on-reserve population of 637 and a total population of 3,774.

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<b>Riding:</b>	Dan Mazier – Dauphin – Swan River - Neepawa	
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Brock Holowachuk	(431) 337 0034
	XXXXX	(819) ...
<b>Consulted:</b>	XXXXX	(819) ...
<b>Parliamentary:</b>	Rebecca Wong	(819) 953-9603
<b>Approved by:</b>	XXXXX	(819) ...

## **Tataskweyak Cree Nation blockade**

- **The safety and security of Indigenous communities is of critical importance.**
- **We are aware of the action taken by members of Tataskweyak Cree Nation to limit entry into their community.**
- **The First Nation is a partner with Manitoba Hydro in the Keeyask project, and residents are concerned that travel into their community might put them at risk for COVID-19. This concern is understandable.**
- **We recognize the right for peaceful demonstrations, and encourage those involved to continue their discussion with Manitoba Hydro about measures to protect residents of Tataskweyak Cree Nation.**

## **If pressed on public health measures being taken by Manitoba Hydro**

- **The safety of First Nations people and communities is our highest priority. This has never been more important than it is right now.**
- **At a minimum, the public health measures of the provincial authority must be respected.**
- **We understand that Manitoba Hydro has taken precautions for workers before they enter the First Nation, including a period of quarantine.**
- **We will support the First Nation in working with their partner on measures they feel are appropriate to protect their community.**

## **Background**

Tataskweyak Cree Nation is located approximately 800 km north of Winnipeg and 120 km northeast of Thompson, Manitoba. The on-reserve population is approximately 2,300. In 2009, Tataskweyak Cree Nation and War Lake First Nation, Fox Lake Cree Nation, and York Factory First Nation, entered into a partnership to develop the Keeyask Hydropower Generating Partnership, a project to develop a 695 megawatt generating station on the Nelson River.

Work on the project involves a construction camp at a remote location, involving approximately 1,400 employees and contractors. The workers on the site are drawn from across Canada and the United States. On March 22, Manitoba Hydro reduced the workforce at Keeyask down to 512 people, and that a shift change is now required for relief of these workers. A shift change was scheduled for May 19 with approximately 700 people entering the work camp. Manitoba Hydro took a number of precautionary steps in advance, such as requiring those entering the site to quarantine for 14 days before entering the community. Additionally, anyone entering the site must be tested for COVID-19 in advance, and respect physical distancing protocols. In an affidavit filed by Manitoba Hydro with Court of Queen's Bench, the Manitoba Chief Medical Officer of Health states that he has reviewed these measures and the comply with current public health directives.

On May 18, 2020, residents of Tatskweyak Cree Nation erected a blockade into the community. Chief Doreen Spence has stated this is only to disrupt traffic into the Keeyask site, and that the measures being taken by Manitoba Hydro is not appropriate for the safety of their community. Manitoba Hydro sought and received an injunction to have access to the work site for a shift change, which was served to the demonstrators on May 19. As of May 19, the blockade remains in place. On May 20, news sources reported that residents of Fox Lake Cree Nation had joined the demonstration, and had placed a blockade at a location near the airport in Gillam, which is used by Manitoba Hydro as the arrival point for crews coming into Keeyask.

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<b>Riding:</b>	Niki Ashton – Churchill-Kewwatinowi-Aski	
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Brock Holowachuk XXXXX	(431) 337 0034 (819) ...
<b>Consulted:</b>	XXXXX	(819) ...
<b>Parliamentary:</b>	Rebecca Wong	(819) 953-9603
<b>Approved by:</b>	XXXXX	(819) ...