



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Vancouver, August 17, 2016

Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) Join Day Scholar Class Action

A powerful voice has joined the table of the Day Scholars Class Action lawsuit. The Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc and shíshálh Nations have been joined by the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) as equal participants in the Executive Advisory Council directing the class action lawsuit.

Launched in 2012 by the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc and shíshálh Nations, the Day Scholars Class Action lawsuit seeks compensation on behalf of all Aboriginal Canadians who attended an Indian Residential School, but who did not sleep there. The case also seeks declarations regarding Canada's role in the failure to protect Aboriginal language and culture, and looks for compensation for the children of survivors, and the Nations to which survivors belong.

Following the certification of the Class Action in the summer of 2015, the call went out to Aboriginal Nations across Canada informing them of the lawsuit and encouraging their participation. More than 90 separate Nations from across Canada signed on to join the class action.

The Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) wanted to take a larger role in the proceedings than simply adding their name to the list of Nations involved in the lawsuit. So after discussions between the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee), the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc and shíshálh Nations it was decided that all three groups would sit together as equal members of the Executive Advisory Council. The Executive Advisory Council is responsible for the management of the lawsuit, including all strategic decisions on how the lawsuit will proceed.

Both the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc and shíshálh Nations are humbled and honoured by the decision of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) to join the Executive Advisory Council.

Chief Craigan of shíshálh says:

“Together we are stronger, and we are glad to be joined at the table by the representative of the Grand Council of the Crees. This has been a long hard fight to this point, and we appreciate the added strength of our eastern friends. We welcome them to our table”

Chief Seymour of Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc says:

“The joining of the Grand Council of the Crees to our Executive Advisory Council brings an important voice to our meetings. The story of the Indian Residential Schools is one that affects Aboriginal Canadians from coast to coast, but some of the details changed from east to west. The Grand Council of the Crees will provide an eastern perspective for discussions as we move forward towards resolution and we are happy they have brought us their expertise.”

Grand Chief Coon Come of the Grand Council of the Crees says:

The Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) represents more than 18,000 Crees of eastern James Bay and Southern Hudson Bay in Northern Quebec. On behalf of the five Cree First Nations who have opted into the Day Scholar Class Action, the Grand Council recognizes and appreciates the courage and commitment of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc and Shishálh First Nations in bringing this important class action lawsuit. We are pleased to be able to assist in this effort and we look forward to working with them on the Executive Advisory Council to obtain justice for Day Scholars and their communities.

Canada has, for several years now, recognized that the Indian Residential Schools had a profound impact not just on those who resided at the schools, but also on their communities and families. But for all its recognition of a ‘cultural genocide’ Canada has refused to provide compensation for those who did not sleep at the schools. This lawsuit aims to rebalance that difference.

For more information please contact:

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