



Union Lake
Cree Nation
TREATY NO.6 TERRITORY



OPEN LETTER TO CHIEFS, FIRST NATIONS CITIZENS, ELDERS AND CLAN MOTHERS

Our Nations Have Not Consented — Protecting Our Treaties, Lands, Waters and Future Generations

October 22, 2026

To our fellow Chiefs, Leaders, Citizens, Elders, Grandmothers, Clan Mothers and Youth:

We write as Union Lake Cree Nation, Saddle Lake Cree Nation, and Tsuut'ina Nation of the undersigned Chiefs and Nations to raise the alarm about the First Nations–First Ministers' Meeting scheduled for October 26, 2026, in Ottawa, and the federal legislative agenda advancing alongside it.

We carry responsibilities entrusted to us by our peoples. Those responsibilities include protecting our Nations' interests, legal positions, inherent authority and Treaty relationships. They extend to the children who are here today and the future generations yet to come. We cannot remain silent when processes affecting our future, and their future proceed without our Nations' free, prior and informed consent.

Let us be clear. We have not authorized the Assembly of First Nations, Regional Chiefs, selected representatives or any other organization to negotiate, make commitments or give consent on behalf of our Nations at this meeting. Whatever the outcome, no declaration, agreement, document or decision adopted or signed at this meeting shall apply to or bind the undersigned Nations, or alter, diminish or prejudice our inherent rights, Treaty relationships, jurisdiction or constitutional positions, without each Nation's express free, prior and informed consent through its own laws and governance processes.

Our Treaties belong to our peoples. Our authority comes from the Creator, our Nations, our Peoples, our laws and the responsibilities entrusted to us. An invitation or a seat at this meeting confers no authority to speak for, negotiate for, or consent on behalf of our Nations. No participant may claim to represent our positions without the express authorization of our respective Nations through our own laws and governance processes.

A meeting about our Nations must respect our Nations' authority

Information we have obtained regarding the meeting describes the October 26 First Nations First Minister's Meeting as a Government of Canada-hosted meeting with limited attendance, and with participation restricted to designated Chiefs determined through

regional leadership. This arrangement leaves many Chiefs and Nations without direct participation in discussions that could shape legislation, national policy and future processes affecting our rights, our Treaties, inherent rights, lands, waters and jurisdiction.

Regional selection does not, by itself, confer authority to speak for every Nation in that region. An invitation to submit comments on documents or speaking points, does not replace our own decision-making processes. An observer's seat does not provide the same authority as direct participation.

We are deeply concerned about who will speak, whose positions will be recorded, how agreement or disagreement will be acknowledged, and whether announcements afterward will be presented as the collective agreement of First Nations.

AFN Resolution 09/2026 itself limits AFN's role to coordination and administration and denies it authority to negotiate or discuss First Nations' Treaties, rights, lands, jurisdiction or Crown relationships independently of affected rights holders. Yet that same resolution calls for a national table on confederation and constitutional change.

These are matters of profound consequence. A mandate to coordinate a meeting cannot be treated as permission to negotiate our Nations' constitutional or Treaty positions.

The Legislative Agenda Makes This Moment Urgent

At the same time, Parliament is considering Bill C-37, the *First Nations Clean Water Act*, and Bill C-39, the *Building Canada Strong Act*. Both have passed second reading and been referred to House committees. Bill C-39 is also undergoing Senate pre-study while the House process continues.

These bills address different subjects and require careful scrutiny. Bill C-37 concerns water and related infrastructure on First Nation lands. Our peoples must have the time, resources and opportunity to examine its implications for their own water laws, jurisdiction, source-water protection and Treaty- Crown funding obligations.

Bill C-39 proposes extensive changes to project assessments and approvals, including specified one-year decision timelines, coordinated consultation processes and expanded national-interest mechanisms. These proposals raise serious questions about whether our Nations will have adequate time and capacity to assess impacts and exercise their own laws and decision-making authority.

We object to legislative urgency being used to compress meaningful scrutiny. We reject any attempt to use the October 26, 2026 meeting as evidence that our Nations support these bills or have consented to the government's broader agenda.

A political meeting cannot supply consent that our peoples have not given. Promises of investment, employment or infrastructure cannot purchase consent to impacts on our lands and waters or replace the Crown's Treaty obligations. The October 26 meeting must not become political cover for these bills.

A Collective Call to Action to Our Peoples

This moment carries an urgency that resembles the Idle No More movement. For us, the convergence of restricted political participation and sweeping legislative proposals is a warning that demands renewed public attention, education and awareness and, grassroots mobilization.

If this is to become an **Idle No More 2.0**, let it be grounded in our peoples' awareness and participation, our laws, our knowledge, our ceremonies and our responsibilities to one another.

We call on Chiefs to bring these matters home to their citizens. We call on Elders and Clan Mothers to share their guidance, and on youth to bring their voices and leadership forward. We call on our peoples to read the documents coming out before and after this meeting, ask who has been authorized to speak, and insist that our Nations' positions be respected.

Join us in peaceful gatherings, community meetings, teach-ins and public action in Ottawa on October 26th and in y(our) territories. Stand together while respecting the independence of each Nation and the protocols of the Algonquin peoples whose territory will host these gatherings.

We call on Canada, the provinces, the territories and AFN to disclose proposed outcomes before their adoption, record our non-consent, expressly exclude our Nations from unauthorized commitments, and provide sufficient time and resources for Nation-directed review of any legislative or policy proposals put forward.

Our duty is to protect the Treaty relationships entrusted to us and the lands and waters that sustain our peoples. Future generations deserve to inherit those relationships and responsibilities intact.

Our Declaration of Non-Consent

For greater certainty, the undersigned Chiefs and Nations expressly declare:

1. **We have not provided our free, prior and informed consent** to be represented in negotiations, commitments or decisions at the October 26, 2026 First Nations First Minister's Meeting in Ottawa.
2. **We do not consent** to any person or organization speaking, negotiating, endorsing or signing on behalf of our Nations without our express authorization through our own governance processes.
3. **No outcome, declaration, communiqué, press release, accord, decision or commitment adopted at the meeting will bind the undersigned Nations** or their Chiefs in their representative capacities without each Nation's express authorization. We reject any claim that such an instrument establishes our consent, changes our Treaty relationship or authorizes interference with our rights and jurisdiction.

4. Our presence in Ottawa, participation in side events/ meetings, attendance at ceremony, receipt of information, silence or absence must not be interpreted as agreement with this pre-determined process.
5. We have not opted into any resulting constitutional table, Treaty implementation forum, fiscal arrangement, revenue sharing, or sectoral process. Any future participation requires a separate decision by each Nation.
6. We reserve our inherent, Treaty, constitutional and other rights, our jurisdiction, and all available legal remedies from now and into the future.

We respect the authority of other Nations to make their own decisions. We insist that the same respect be extended to ours.

Our peoples must know what is being proposed, who claims authority to agree, and what future generations stand to inherit. We have a duty to bring these decisions into the light before commitments are made in the name of our Nations.

Our Nations have not consented. No one has authority to give that consent for us.

In the Spirit of Protecting Our Treaties,



Okimaw Pete Chief, B.Ed., M.Ed.
Wicekaskosiw Sakahikan Nehiyaw Askiy
Onion Lake Cree Nation



Okimawskwew Dale Steinhauer, B.Ed., M.Ed.
Onihcikiskwapowin
Saddle Lake Cree Nation



Xàkíj (Chief) Ellery Starlight
Tsuut'ina Nation