



June 14, 2011

The Honourable John Duncan, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
Ottawa ON K1A 0H4

Dear Minister Duncan:

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) supports the Secwepemc Nation's goal of full jurisdiction over Secwepemc children and family services in their traditional territory and strongly encourages a tripartite meeting to occur between the British Columbia (BC) Minister of Children and Family Development, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, and the Secwepemc Nation.

The AFN is the national, political representative of First Nations governments and their citizens in Canada, including those living on reserve and in urban and rural areas.

The AFN is responsible to protect, maintain, promote, support and defend inherent, treaty and constitutional rights, holistic health, and the well-being of First Nations communities. This is achieved through policy analysis, communications, and, most importantly, representing First Nations communities and individuals. The AFN represents, supports, and advocates on behalf of First Nations to ensure that properly funded services and programs are delivered at the same level enjoyed by all Canadians. The ultimate goal is First Nations control of the development and delivery of all health and social services, including programs.

In view of the vast overrepresentation of First Nations children and youth in child welfare systems across Canada, there is an urgent need for a re-examination of systemic beliefs and underlying principles and procedures. We are most interested in learning how we can support and encourage a tripartite meeting regarding the restoration of Secwepemc jurisdiction of Secwepemc child and family services between the Secwepemc Nation, the Province of British Columbia, and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

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We look forward to the success of the outcomes of this meeting for the benefit of First Nations children and families and Canada. Our organization will be pleased to continue our collaboration with the Secwepemc Nation, the Province British Columbia, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and any other partners working on this important initiative.

Respectfully,



Shawn A-in-chut Atleo
National Chief

c.c.: Kukpi7 Wayne Christian, Shuswap National Tribal Council
Chief Bev Sellars, Northern Shuswap Tribal Council
The Honourable Mary McNeil, Minister of Children and Family Development,
Government of British Columbia