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## **WABUN TRIBAL COUNCIL DEMANDS TRANSPARENCY FROM CANADA, SEEKS FINAL RESOLUTION OF COURT CHALLENGE TO FALSE CLAIMS OF MÉTIS RIGHTS**

Timmins, ON — Wabun Tribal Council announces it will refocus its court challenge of false claims of Métis rights in Wabun territory to attempt to speed up a final hearing of the matter.

“Canada is determined to keep stonewalling and refusing to provide any legitimate basis for its decision to try to create rights for so-called Métis groups that have never existed in our territory,” said Jason Batise, Executive Director of Wabun Tribal Council. “Canada thinks it is entitled to completely ignore our rights, our laws, and our jurisdiction, in addition to ignoring its constitutional obligations.”

Wabun Tribal Council brought an urgent motion for a temporary injunction in March, but that motion has been delayed until November by a preliminary motion brought by the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), which was heard last week. Wabun is now seeking to move forward with a motion to demand Canada produce its official record of the decision to enter into an Agreement to formally recognize MNO, and to obtain dates for a full hearing of the case rather than obtaining an injunction.”

“We don’t want a temporary measure that ends up dragging this case out. We want Canada to show us their evidence and show us what authority they are relying on to try to create illegitimate rights-holders in our territories. Canada refuses to provide any basis for its decision, trying to hide its reasons for the decision,” said Batise. “Canada stated in court they haven’t recognized any claims of the so-called Abitibi Inland Métis Community, but Canada’s secrecy, vagueness, and shifting positions mean we simply can’t rely on Canada’s word alone.”

Unlike Canada, the First Nations of Wabun Tribal Council do not have unlimited resources, and cannot waste time dealing with Canada’s shifting story. “We want a full hearing on the full record as soon as possible,” said Batise.

At the hearing of MNO’s motion to strike last week, Canada argued that it was entitled to recognize new s. 35 rights-holders without following Supreme Court of Canada guidance, and that the courts should not be allowed to review Canada’s Agreement with MNO – whether it was right or wrong.

“As the people who have lived on these lands for thousands of years we have the right to have some say about whether groups claiming to be “Indigenous” to our lands have any legitimacy,” Batise said. “Many of these folks that MNO claims as “Métis” are members from our communities that have been dislocated by the *Indian Act*. Discovering you have mixed ancestry doesn’t mean you are Métis.”

“Our First Nations are committed to continuing this fight. It is wrong for Canada to enable assertions from groups claiming to be something they are not in order to gain access to rights and lands in our territory,” he said.

For more information please go to: <https://fnrightsatrisk.ca/>.

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### **About the Wabun Tribal Council**

Wabun Tribal Council serves six First Nations (Brunswick House FN, Chapleau Ojibwe FN, Flying Post FN, Matachewan FN, Mattagami FN, and Beaverhouse FN). Wabun Tribal Council is a non-profit community-driven organization that is committed to providing quality services for its member First Nations through innovative and culturally appropriate programming.

Wabun receives direction from and is accountable to its Board of Directors, made up of the Chiefs of each of the member First Nations. All senior personnel report to the Executive Director, who oversees the operation of the Tribal Council.

Wabun is headquartered at Mattagami First Nation, and its operational office is located in Timmins.