

JOINT STATEMENT TO FOUNDING MEMBER APPLICANTS OF THE SERVICE MEMBERS AGREEMENT

The Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation (QFN), the Federation of Newfoundland Indians (FNI) and Canada are providing the following update to the service members and Veterans of the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq community, specifically individuals who have applied for Founding Membership with Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation.

Significant work has already been undertaken by the three Parties toward implementation of the 2023 Service Members Agreement, including ongoing collaboration and preparatory activities in support of the enrolment process.

While all three Parties are firmly committed to complete the implementation of the Service Members Agreement expeditiously and in a spirit of cooperation, Canada has decided to await a decision from the Court of Appeal of Newfoundland and Labrador in the matter of the *Federation of Newfoundland Indians Inc. v. Benoit* before proceeding with further work towards implementation of the Agreement. Canada respects the views of QFN and the FNI who wish to continue the implementation work without interruption, but Canada believes that the most prudent course of action would be to await further clarity from the Court.

All applicant files remain active, and no further action is required at this time. However, we kindly ask that all applicants ensure their contact information is up to date to facilitate future communication (see toll-free number below).

We recognize that this delay may be frustrating and may give rise to concerns, particularly for Veterans and service members awaiting decisions. We sincerely appreciate the community's patience and understanding.

The Parties remain deeply committed to the health and well-being of Mi'kmaq Veterans and the service member community. We recognize that mental health is a critical pillar of overall wellness, and we are dedicated to ensuring that everyone has access to the support they need.

The Hope for Wellness Helpline offers immediate help to all Indigenous people across Canada. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to offer immediate support and crisis intervention. The toll-free Helpline can be reached at [1-855-242-3310](tel:1-855-242-3310) or, alternatively, one can connect to an online chat at www.hopeforwellness.ca.

Should you have any questions on the above or the QFN enrolment process, you are encouraged to visit the following websites: <https://canada.ca/qalipuenrolment> or <https://qalipu.ca>. You may also call the Government of Canada Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation toll-free telephone line at 1-800-561-2266 (Teletypewriter mode: 1-800-465-7735). The Federation of Newfoundland Indians can be reached by writing to: PO Box 390, Stephenville NL, A2H 2Y9.

Signed,

Chief Jenny Brake, Qalipu First Nation
President Dave Wells, The Federation of Newfoundland Indians
Rory O'Connor, Director General – Governance and Operations Branch,
Indigenous Services Canada