

February 7, 2020



Re: All Chiefs Meeting with Premier Kenney

Dear Chiefs,

I am writing you in advance of the all chiefs meeting with Premier Kenney on February 12, regarding a pressing matter.

Over the past several months, Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN) has continued to push Alberta to mitigate some of the environmental and social impacts of Teck Frontier project that fall outside of Teck and the Federal Government's control. ACFN is the closest Nation to the proposed project and issues like threats to water levels on the Athabasca River, bison habitat, and migratory birds are all very important to us. We have a similar table with Canada where they have dealt with our concerns constructively. Teck has been very good at cooperating with us to address these concerns, but they can only do so much.

Throughout this process, Alberta has made it clear that they will not fulfill their duty under section 35 of the Constitution to consult and accommodate. ACFN is a supporter of the Teck Frontier project, however Alberta's refusal to work with us respectfully jeopardizes this project's federal approval, putting jobs and benefits for our Nation (and all Albertans) at risk.

Premier Kenney has been vocal in the media blaming Canada for delaying the project, however the truth is that it is Alberta's refusal to cooperate in good faith, that puts the project at risk.

Instead, Alberta has told us repeatedly that they would rather deal with us through the Indigenous Opportunities Corporation (IOC). Setting aside Alberta's failure to consult, here is why this is a bad idea:

- In the October budget, the Alberta government eliminated the Alberta Lottery Fund, which had specific rules about how gaming revenue was spent, and who it went to. Up until this point, that money was held in trust for Indigenous Peoples for things like housing projects, employment, youth and cultural programming. Now there are credible suspicions that the Kenney government is planning to divert this money toward programs that only support the oil & gas sector – like the Indigenous Opportunities Corporation.
- In the October budget, Alberta slashed funding from Aboriginal Relations for consultation, court challenges, land claims and climate change. They diverted those funds to the Indigenous Opportunities Corporation and a new court challenges program which can only be used to defend resource industry projects.
- In order to apply to the IOC program, Nations will be forced to turn over all of our financial information. It is essentially Harper's Transparency Act all over again. This is not right and is a violation of our sovereignty.
- This fund is marketed as a way for Nations to get out of poverty, however it requires a \$20 million up front payment by the Nation in order to apply. For many Nations this amount is out of reach.
- For Nations fortunate enough to be able to reach the \$20 million threshold, all the program does is back loans. Some Nations do not need this support, and the Alberta government has no plans to assist Nations in that position. The only thing the Government of Alberta is offering in this case is debt.
- This money can only be used to invest in oil and gas projects; activities that contribute to the climate crisis and are increasingly viewed by institutional investors and central banks as soon-to-be stranded assets. Investors around the world are fleeing these types of companies, which is why the Alberta government wants us to give them your money.
- This fund is essentially a way for the government to take money intended for First Nations and funnel it to their friends in the oil and gas sector.
- This fund will pit First Nations against one another by giving Nations outside of Alberta access to capital to develop oil and gas projects on your traditional territory.

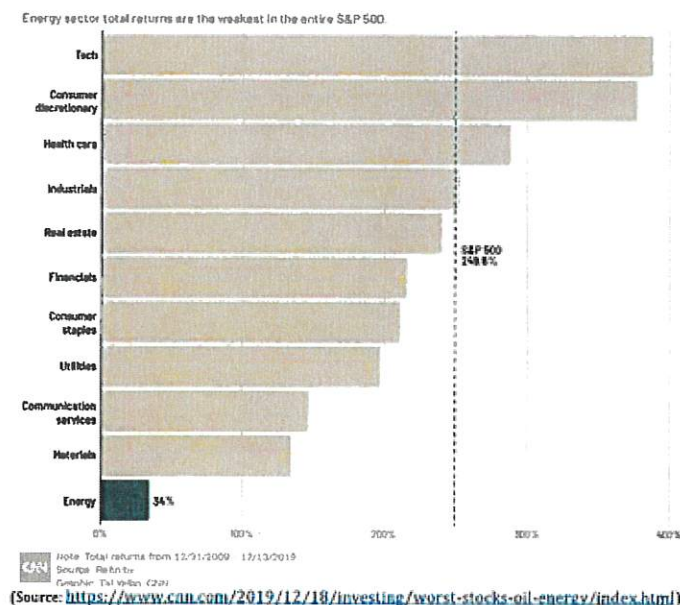
- This fund would put your Nation in debt to the Alberta government. That is not something that any Nation should be eager to do. Energy companies and the Alberta government should be looking for ways of compensating us in the spirit of reconciliation, not the other way around.

For these reasons and others, we are asking you to send a strong message to the Premier at the upcoming all Chiefs meeting on Feb 12-- that the IOC is not the proper tool for the job, and it certainly does not replace Alberta's duty to consult and mitigate the environmental and social impacts resulting from major industrial projects.

If the government of Alberta is serious about getting Indigenous communities on board with major industrial projects, it should provide a share of the realized tax revenue from each project to impacted Nations. Why should we have to assume massive financial risk, when the Alberta government collects tens of billions in revenue from these projects on your traditional territories? Why should we divert money intended for community services and give it to Premier Kenney's favourite oil companies?

None of this adds up.

If any of you still think it is a good idea to assume debt in order to invest in these companies, please take a look at the chart below. Energy, particularly fossil fuel companies, are among the lowest performing asset classes this past decade. Investing in anything else would have yielded better returns.



Please join me in urging the Alberta government to reconsider its position on this misguided policy.

All the best,

Chief Allan Adam
Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation
Treaty 8 Territory