

A sunset over a lake with silhouettes of trees in the foreground. The sky is a mix of blue, orange, and red, with the sun low on the horizon. The water reflects the colors of the sky. In the foreground, there are dark silhouettes of trees and a small structure.

FIRST NATION COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE ON POLICY NEEDS IN THE RING OF FIRE

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RECOGNITION OF INDIGENOUS LAWS AND JURISDICTION

- In our community, our Elders have told us about the “Manitou Aki Onakoneekaywin.” This “Manitou Aki Onakoneekaywin” is translated into “the Creator’s Earth Laws.” These laws have been handed down from generation to generation.
- Policy must begin from a recognition of Indigenous laws and jurisdiction. Under Canadian Law, policy is viewed as “soft law”, i.e. it flows from government’s law-making authority and establishes norms for short and long term decision making.

A FUNDAMENTAL SHIFT IN SOCIETY'S WAY OF THINKING

- Society has erroneously accepted the “Doctrine of Discovery” mindset for the last 500 years. This mindset has played an enormous cost to the First Nations peoples’ right to their own lands and resources. First Nations people knew the heart of God long before the Gospel was preached to them.
- What is required is a fundamental shift in society’s/Federal and Provincial governments’ way of thinking.

FIRST NATION'S RIGHTS TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN POLICIES

- Under the “Manitou Aki Onakoneekaywin”, there are principles that have guided the First Nation society for hundreds of years. These principles translate how we view the land, resources and relationships.
- What needs to be recognized is that First Nations have their own laws and decision-making and therefore, have the right to develop their own policies.
- These policies must be respected by Federal, Provincial and Non-Aboriginal Society.

RECONCILIATION

- In our community's Lands & Resources Policy April 2004, there are guiding principles that are outlined in the document.
- Where First Nation Policy conflicts with Non-First Nation Policy, reconciliation begins.
- Reconciliation is a process.

CONCLUSION

- If we are to develop good working harmonious relationships with all levels of government and industry in any development, respect and honour to our First Nation must begin.
- What has to stop is government's unilateral policy announcements.



MEEGWETCH!