



**ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS
BULLETIN
ASSEMBLÉE DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS**

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**NATIONAL CHIEF RESPONDS TO TABLING
OF INDEPENDENT CLAIMS BODY LEGISLATION**

The National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Matthew Coon Come, responded today to the content of the proposed legislation creating an Independent Claims Body (ICB) to deal with the outstanding land claims between First Nations and Canada. The legislation is the result of more than 12 years of work by the Assembly of First Nations and the federal government.

“We have been pushing long and hard for this legislation. I have stated over and over that we need to resolve outstanding land claims in order to allow our citizens the opportunity to deal with the past so we can all move into the future. While there are still major concerns regarding the proposed legislation, I am relieved to see it tabled. We can now move ahead and work with MP’s and Senators to bring about some important changes to the legislation to address the concerns that we have with it in its present form,” stated National Chief Coon Come.

The key concerns revolve around the independence of the appointment process to the ICB and the capped limit of the value of the claims that can be dealt with by the tribunal. The proposed legislation gives the federal government sole discretion over appointments to the ICB. Furthermore, the limit on the value of the claims that the tribunal can make is totally contrary to the principles of natural justice.

“The appointment process makes the entire process open to possible patronage nominations. This will not serve Canada or First Nations well. We want to ensure that nominations are made and approved jointly to ensure that the tribunal is independent and seen to be legitimate by First Nations and all Canadians,” stated the National Chief.

“We are also concerned about the proposed capping of the tribunal’s authority to accept and resolve claims,” said National Chief Coon Come. “Lawful obligations should not be subject to arbitrary limitations. We cannot put a cap on justice.”

