



Dene National / Assembly of First Nations Office (NWT)

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December 19, 2022

Hon. Caroline Cochrane

Premier, Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs

Government of the Northwest Territories

P.O. Box 1320

Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9

RE: Dene Nation Leadership Meeting Resolution – Housing Crisis

Dear Premier,

At our recent Dene Leadership Meeting in Yellowknife (12-16 December, 2022), Dene Chiefs unanimously supported the attached *Resolution 22-010* regarding the housing crisis.

As Dene Chiefs, we were encouraged to learn of the \$60 Million investment from Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs in April of 2022. As Dene, we have a treaty right to housing through our treaty relationships with the Crown, more specifically Treaty 8 and Treaty 11. Canada's Housing Policy Declaration under the National Housing Strategy Act, 2019, recognizes that the right to adequate housing is a fundamental human right affirmed in international law and recognizes that housing is essential to the inherent dignity and well-being. Dene Chiefs were shocked and disappointed to learn that money allocated to Dene communities in the NWT were subsequently spent (on public housing projects) through Housing NWT in 2021-22 and are being planned to be spent in 2022-23.

Premier, when this money was announced last April, the NWT Housing Minister (Hon. Paulie Chinna) said that she was working with NWT communities to determine these needs and would be relying on partnerships with Indigenous Peoples to distribute this money. These partnerships have not materialized or developed and proper engagement and decision making did not occur. It was clear in that announcement that these funds were not for repairs and/or renovations yet these are exactly how these funds are being spent on public housing for Housing NWT.

Leaders wanted to know why they were not meaningfully consulted on this funding allocation and why this money being spent on public housing when we have a housing crisis in our Dene communities. Expectations were high in our communities when this funding was announced but they were never approached. In addition, why do we have to learn about these spending practices by the Government of Northwest Territories through buried information in reports like the 2023-2024 Capital Estimates?

As mentioned in the Resolution, there has been no meaningful engagement with Dene First Nations and this is a clear breach of Treaties 8 and 11.

By allocating these funds in this manner, the GNWT is not living up to its legal obligation to notify First Nations and have them involved in the decision making process. Therefore, we request that there be an immediate discussion with Dene Leadership to reallocate these housing funds to the Dene in Denendeh. We will contact your office to schedule this meeting early in the New Year.

Respectfully,

Gerald Antoine
Dene National Chief
AFN Regional Chief - NWT

CC.
Hon. Dan Vandal (Northern Affairs)
Hon. Mark Miller (Crown-Indigenous Relations)
Hon. Patty Hajdu (Indigenous Services)
Member of Parliament - NWT – Michael V. McLeod
Regional Director General Matthew Spence (CIRNAC - NWT)
AFN National Chief
Hon. Paulie Chinna (Housing NWT)
All GNWT MLAs
All DN Leaders

Attachment

“Upholding and Protecting the Rights and Interests of the Dene Nation”



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**DENE LEADERSHIP MEETING
YELLOWKNIFE, DENENDEH
DECEMBER 13 - 15, 2022**

RESOLUTION #22-012

SUBJECT: Housing Crisis

MOVED BY: Chief Kele Antoine, Liidli Kue First Nation

SECONDED BY: Chief Thaidene Paulette, Smith Landing First Nation

DECISION: MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

WHEREAS, the Dene Nation has convened the Dene Leadership Meeting, in the city of Yellowknife, Chief Drygeese Territory, Denendeh on December 13 to 15, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the Dene are parties to the international treaties 8 and 11 with the British Crown; and

WHEREAS, the Dene have a Treaty right to housing; and

WHEREAS, the GNWT received 60 million dollars over 2 years from Crown Indigenous Relations to tackle the “housing crisis”; and

WHEREAS, the GNWT has identified in the 2023 – 2024 Capital Estimates tabled in the NWT Legislative Assembly on October 18th, 2022; and

WHEREAS, on page 73 of the GNWT Capitol Estimates it indicates that allocation of approximately 35 million will be spent in public housing; and

WHEREAS, in 2021 – 2022 the GNWT spent 30 million dollars towards public housing projects; and

WHEREAS, the funds should have been allocated to First Nations in the NWT; and

WHEREAS, there has been no meaningful engagement with Dene First Nations regarding these funds.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that there needs to be an immediate discussion with the Dene Leadership to reallocate funds to the Dene in Denendeh.

Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 15th day of December 2022 in the city of Yellowknife, Chief Drygeese Territory, Denendeh.

Gerald Antoine, Dene National Chief

RESOLUTION 22-012