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MANITOBA AND INTERLAKE RESERVES TRIBAL COUNCIL SIGN CONSULTATION AGREEMENT

Consultation Process Will Inform Decision-making on Project: Clarke

The Manitoba government has formally entered into an agreement with the Interlake Reserves Tribal Council (IRTC) that will allow them to consult, engage and discuss innovative ideas for the proposed Lake Manitoba Lake St. Martin Outlet Channels project, Indigenous and Northern Relations Minister Eileen Clarke announced today.

“Community members hold extensive land and resource-use knowledge within the proposed project area and facilitating robust, comprehensive and respectful consultations is a priority for our government,” said Clarke. “This exciting consultation arrangement with the IRTC represents another important step forward for our government’s agenda of working together and fostering positive partnerships with Indigenous communities across Manitoba.”

Through the agreement, the IRTC will lead efforts to engage the communities in the Crown-Indigenous consultation process through community engagement with their members, which include the Pinaymootang, Little Saskatchewan, Kinonjeoshtegon, Peguis, Lake Manitoba and Dauphin River First Nations. The consultation process will allow for information sharing and understanding of the proposed project, and will gather perspectives of the IRTC First Nations communities, the minister said.

“We are pleased this new provincial government is willing to fund these very important traditional knowledge land-use studies for our Interlake Reserves Tribal Council member communities,” said Karl Zadnik, chief executive officer, IRTC. “In 2011 and in the past, these studies were not completed and we need to ensure our traditional and inherent rights to the land and its use are well documented moving forward.”

“We are hoping the government is going to do what’s right and fulfil their constitutional duty to consult and we are optimistic that this process will lead to the approval of projects that will be beneficial and respectful to everyone,” Chief Cornell McLean, Lake Manitoba First Nation, and chairman, IRTC. “We have a very high unemployment rate and it’s important for us to be equal partners here with the proposed Channel Reach 2 and 3 in regards to construction contracts and them being sole sourced.”

Clarke added the Manitoba government is committed to strengthening relationships with Indigenous peoples through meaningful consultation and noted that outcomes resulting from the consultation process will inform decision-making and information sharing in the future.