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FIRST NATIONS LAY CLAIM TO ALL CRITICAL MINERALS AND RARE EARTH ELEMENTS IN SASKATCHEWAN

Treaty 6 Territory, Saskatoon SK – First Nations lay claim to all rare earth minerals on Treaty territories, say the leaders of the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN).

As the province moves forward with the Saskatchewan Growth Plan: the Next Decade of Growth 2020- 2030, First Nations seek inclusion and engagement in the economy.

Today, an announcement by Energy and Resources Minister Jim Reiter was not discussed with First Nations. Reiter introduced a proposed increase to the Saskatchewan Mineral Exploration Tax Credit (SMETC) from 10 per cent to 30 per cent to entice investment and mining.

FSIN says as the province makes exploration incentives more competitive, First Nations must be included.

“With First Nations people comprising one of the fastest growing youth populations in the province and up-and-coming workforce, we encourage the Saskatchewan government to engage in meaningful inclusion with First Nations in critical mineral mining and resource revenue sharing in the days to come. Rare earth minerals are not exclusively the property of the provincial government. These rare earth minerals are being mined on First Nations' ancestral and traditional territory. Investors and companies interested in mining rare earth minerals must meet with First Nations chiefs and community leaders to seek their inclusion and approval prior to extracting these non-renewable resources. Our Inherent and Treaty rights guaranteed a century ago, and enshrined in international law, provide us with rights to these minerals,” said FSIN Chief Bobby Cameron.

Saskatchewan has 23 of the 31 critical minerals on the Canadian Critical Minerals List, says the province. The 2023 Budget claims to build on Saskatchewan’s position as a global leader in the exploration and mining of critical minerals.

“Our Inherent and Treaty rights need to be accommodated. All of these critical minerals are situated within First Nations' ancestral and Treaty territory. The budget commits \$4.0 million to expand Targeted Mineral Exploration Incentives, including exploration drilling for all hard-rock minerals and increases the funding limit to support emerging commodities. However, before Saskatchewan solicits investments from around the globe, they need to ensure that they consult

with First Nations to guarantee Inherent and Treaty rights are not infringed upon and that we are included in economic opportunities in the province we inhabit,” said Fourth Vice Chief Heather Bear.

FSIN says the Growth Plan excludes First Nations and is racist in its attempt to harvest natural resources without engaging First Nations people and including them in economic opportunities going forward. Besides rare earth mining, the province says the Growth Plan goals for the year 2030 are to increase potash sales to \$9 billion, double the size of the forestry industry, and increase oil production to 600,000 barrels per day. FSIN leaders say this is a plan to strip the resources from the land without depositing any wealth into First Nations coffers.

“Once non-renewable resources are extracted from the ground they are gone forever. Once the wealth has been dispersed and spent, it’s gone. We’d like to work with the province to create a resource revenue sharing agreement to ensure our First Nations people are included in employment opportunities and First Nations companies are considered for contracts,” said Fourth Vice Chief Heather Bear, Lands and Resources Portfolio holder.

SOURCES:

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/budget-planning-and-reporting/plan-for-growth/30-goals-for-2030>

About FSIN

The Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations represents 73 First Nations in Saskatchewan. The Federation is committed to honouring the spirit and intent of the Treaties, as well as the promotion, protection and implementation of the Treaty promises that were made more than a century ago.

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For more information or to arrange interviews, please contact:

Lisa Risom
Director of Communications
Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations
10 - 134 Kahkewistahaw Crescent
Treaty Six Territory
Saskatoon, SK S7R 0M9
Cell: 306-987-0505 | FSIN Office: 306-665-1215
Email: communications@fsin.com