

Media Release



Peepeekisis Cree Nation

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Canada and The Peepeekisis Cree Nation Celebrate Settlement of Specific Claim

Peepeekisis Cree Nation, Saskatchewan — Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada

(Peepeekisis Cree Nation) Working collaboratively to renew relationships and to right historical wrongs is key to advancing reconciliation with First Nations in Canada.

Today, Chief Francis Dieter and the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, announced that the Peepeekisis Cree Nation and the Government of Canada have concluded their negotiated settlement to resolve the File Hills Colony Specific Claim.

The century-old claim concerned Canada's breach of fiduciary obligations when it implemented the File Hills Farm Colony Scheme with its first transfer and settlement of industrial school graduates onto the Peepeekisis Cree Nation's reserve without the informed and willing consent of Peepeekisis Cree Nation in 1898. The Colony Scheme included providing parcels of prime agricultural Peepeekisis reserve lands without the Nation's consent. In creating and implementing the Colony Scheme, Canada breached its fiduciary duty to the Nation by failing to protect the Nation's interest in the land and not providing any compensation to the Nation. The historic and ongoing harm that the Colony Scheme caused to the Peepeekisis Nation created community divisions and animosity between families and members. The legacy of the Colony Scheme continues to impact the Nation to this day.

Under the settlement, Canada will provide Peepeekisis Cree Nation with \$150 million in total compensation, with the option to acquire up to 18,720 acres of land and for said land to be added to reserve in accordance with all applicable laws and Canada's policies and procedures respecting reserve creation.

Achieved through dialogue and co-operation, this historic negotiated settlement will help to address the wrongs of the past committed against the Peepeekisis Cree Nation, and starts to pave the way for the Government of Canada to renew and advance reconciliation with the Peepeekisis Cree Nation.

Quotes

"In 1986, 35 years ago we submitted the File Hills Colony Specific Claim. The struggle for some measure of justice has been long and difficult. As we celebrate the File Hills Colony Settlement Agreement, it is important that we acknowledge and remember our elders and members who lived through this dark

chapter of our Nation. They have paved the way by contributing invaluable testimony and truths, which have led us to this success today and for our future generations.”

Chief Enock Poitras,
Peepeekisis Cree Nation

“Peepeekisis Cree Nation was always determined to get a fair resolution and after a long battle, I am relieved that we have reached a Settlement Agreement for the File Hills Colony Specific Claim. Our community has suffered harms but we are a strong people and the Settlement Agreement will allow the Nation to make significant community investments for both today and tomorrow and improve the lives of all community members. It is important that Canadians know this history and the truths of the File Hills Colony Specific Claim.”

Chief Beverly Bellegarde,
Peepeekisis Cree Nation

“After decades of opposition and denials by Canada and the judicial system, the File Hills Colony Specific Claim has finally been settled. Moving forward this Settlement Agreement will allow our community to close this unfortunate chapter in our shared history, heal and prosper for our future generations. We cannot change the past, but the resolution of this Specific Claim provides us with the opportunity to move forward together within Peepeekisis Cree Nation and with Canada.”

Chief Francis Dieter
Peepeekisis Cree Nation

“The “Colony Scheme” forever altered the social and cultural fabric of the Peepeekisis Cree Nation, through the prohibition of pow-wows, dances, and other forms of ceremony, as well as, forced marriages between original members and transferred industrial school graduates. The effects of this colonial policy are still felt by the community today. Everyone in Canada needs to know the truth of what happened. The successful resolution of this specific claim is essential to rebuilding our relationship with Peepeekisis Cree Nation, in a good way. We thank Chief Enock Poitras, Chief Beverly Bellegarde, Chief Francis Dieter and their negotiation team, as well as the entire Peepeekisis Cree Nation for their dedication, perseverance and collaborative efforts. We are committed to working in partnership with Peepeekisis Cree Nation on their priorities for their community, now and in the future. Today is an important step towards healing and reconciliation.”

The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, M.D., P.C., M.P.
Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations

Quick facts

- Progress on the resolution of specific claims continues. From April 1, 2020 to May 37, 2021, 36 specific claims were resolved for \$1.75 billion in compensation paid to First Nations.

- As of May 31, 2021, there were 588 claims in the Specific Claims Inventory: 161 in assessment, 359 in negotiations and 68 under the purview of the Specific Claims Tribunal.
- After 32 years in Federal Courts, the Peepeekisis Cree Nation submitted the File Hills Colony Specific Claim to the Specific Claims Tribunal in 2017. The Peepeekisis Cree Nation submitted the File Hills Colony Specific Claim to the Minister in 1986. In 2004, the Indian Claims Commission (“ICC”) recommended that the claim be accepted by Canada for negotiation under the Specific Claims Policy.
- In December 2020 the Peepeekisis Cree Nation finalized the File Hills Colony Specific Claim Settlement Agreement with the Government of Canada.
- The File Hills Colony Specific Claim includes compensation from Canada to the Peepeekisis Cree Nation in the amount of \$150,000,000, an additions to reserve for Peepeekisis to purchase certain lands and a Reconciliation Statement provided by Canada to the Nation.

For more information, media may contact:

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