



## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

### First Nations Treaty Leaders Respond to Throne Speech Delivered by King Charles III

#### *“We Are Not Here for Ceremony—We Are Here for Justice”*

**Unceded Algonquin Anishinabek Territory, Ottawa, ON** — Treaty leaders from across the Prairies and Northern Canada are responding to today’s historic Speech from the Throne, delivered by His Majesty King Charles III in Canada’s Senate Chamber. This joint response calls attention to the profound gap between ceremonial gestures and the reality of unfulfilled Treaty obligations.

This marks the first time King Charles has delivered the Throne Speech in Canada since his ascension in 2022. The ceremony opened with a performance by Métis fiddler Morgan Grace of Manitoba and featured Traditional colonial protocols, with dignitaries including former Prime Ministers and First Nations leadership led into the Red Chamber by the Usher of the Black Rod.

While the King acknowledged the Unceded Territory on which he stood and expressed hopes for a future rooted in “Truth and Reconciliation – in word and in deed,” First Nations leaders stressed that real Reconciliation must begin with justice, Treaty implementation, and shared decision-making.

Joint Treaty leadership calls for:

- **Inclusion of First Nations staff and governance roles** in the Major Projects Office;
- **Legislated First Nations roles** in environmental assessments and procurement;
- **Protection of Treaty and Inherent Rights** in interprovincial trade legislation;
- **Recognition that no project proceeds without free, prior, and informed consent.**

“I was honoured to attend the Speech from the Throne alongside a small delegation of First Nations leaders,” said **Grand Chief Kyra Wilson** of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. “It’s concerning that not all First Nations leadership were present or included in this historical moment. And this exclusion is in contradiction to the spirit and intent of our Treaties. These sacred covenants, that our ancestors entered into with the Crown, were made in ceremony and in good faith. They were signed with the understanding that our Nations would never be subordinated, but respected as partners.”

“We are requesting and expecting His Majesty The King to meet with First Nations Chiefs on our unceded, unsurrendered Ancestral and Traditional Territories to promote, protect and implement our Inherent and Treaty Rights. The Crown must fulfill its constitutional obligations and honour the Nation-to-Nation relationship that forms the foundation of our shared history,” said **AFN Regional Chief Bobby Cameron, and FSIN Vice Chief David Pratt.**

“The Throne Speech means little without action,” said **Grand Chief Greg Desjarlais**, Confederacy of Treaty No. 6 First Nations. “We are here to say the era of symbolic gestures is over. It’s time for the Crown to honour the Treaties in law, in policy, and in budget.”

“First Nations leaders from every Treaty Territory came together in unity today,” said **AFN Regional Chief Willie Moore**. “That unity is not just ceremonial, it is political. We are here to see justice, implementation, and respect for our Nations.”

“What we witnessed today must not be remembered for its pageantry alone,” added **Grand Chief Jerry Daniels**, Southern Chiefs’ Organization. “It must be remembered as the day we called on the Crown to end its silence and act on the spirit and intent of Treaty.”

Among the key commitments outlined in the Throne Speech were proposals to eliminate federal interprovincial trade barriers, create a centralized Major Projects Office to speed up approvals, and reduce the federal operating budget. These announcements raise immediate concerns if they don’t involve First Nations right from the start.

While Canada pledges to spend less on its operations, Treaty leaders emphasize that fiscal restraint must not come at the cost of justice for First Nations Peoples.

As King Charles remarked on the need for “renewal” during a time of global instability, Treaty leadership reminds all Canadians that the foundation of this country remains unresolved. If this Throne Speech truly marks a new chapter, then let it begin with the truth. First Nations are not seeking reconciliation through symbolism – we are demanding justice through implementation.

As Canada prepares to host the G7 summit in June and speak of unity on the world stage, First Nations remind the federal government that unity begins with accountability. The national anthem ends with a promise – “*The True North strong and free*” – but it cannot be truly strong or free until the rights, voices, and governments of First Nations are fully recognized and respected.

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