

Revenue-sharing negotiations key part of Ipperwash process

Dudley George was the first Aboriginal person to be killed in a land rights dispute in Canada since the nineteenth century.

Released in 2007, the Report of the Ipperwash Inquiry includes recommendations directed to the avoidance of violence in similar future circumstances.

Important steps were taken to advance priority recommendations at the Ontario Special Chiefs Assembly, April 12-14 in Toronto.

Resource Revenue/Benefit Sharing

The Ipperwash Report recommends that the provincial government work with First Nations to develop co-management arrangements and resource sharing initiatives.

For months prior to the Assembly, First Nation and provincial representative had been engaged in negotiations to secure an agreement on resource sharing. First Nation leadership determined that the province did not engage this work with a mandate consistent with the spirit of the Ipperwash Report. As a result, an agreement has not been reached.

Despite this setback, the First Nation leadership reaffirmed their commitment. They adopted a resolution to direct the development of a comprehensive strategy on resource revenue and benefit-sharing consistent with their Treaty Nations Declaration.

The Declaration speaks to First Nations inherent rights and jurisdiction over lands, resources, water and air; and also to the principle of sharing embodied within the Treaty relationship. This principle requires a fair and equitable allocation of all resources derived from resource development.

Signaling what is to come, Anishinabek Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee was clear. "Our generosity and willingness to share our resources has made Canada one of the richest countries in the world. It's time for us to implement our Treaty rights and assert our jurisdiction over our lands and resources."

Treaty Commission of Ontario

A cornerstone recommendation of the Ipperwash Report calls for the provincial government to establish a permanent, independent and impartial agency to facilitate and oversee the settling of land and treaty claims in Ontario.

Discussions have been occurring to develop an engagement process that would scope out aspects relating to the mandate, structure and authority of a body to oversee Treaty grievances.

A resolution was passed at the Assembly mandating a unified and staged approach to this process.

A key aspect of the staged approach includes an engagement process with Treaty Regions and First Nation governments. The results of engagement will guide First Nation leadership in determining the way forward.

First Nations Policing

The Ipperwash Report stresses the need for federal and provincial governments to recognize self-administered First Nation policing services as the primary police service providers in their communities.

A series of policing Forums with First Nation citizens, First Nations Chiefs of Police and First Nation leadership was held recently to explore the recommendations.

Feedback reiterates the Ipperwash recommendations, particularly the call for First Nation police services to be considered essential government services, not “second class” programs, and to be afforded the appropriate framework of governance, funding, policing standards, and appointment and powers of officers.

First Nation leadership passed a resolution directing the First Nation Ipperwash Task Force to develop a First Nation Policing Strategy that will include research on a vision for First Nation police services, information about funding, and a legal opinion including options for a legislative basis.

For more information on the Ipperwash Inquiry and the role of the Union of Ontario Indians in the implementation process, visit: <http://www.anishinabek.ca/ipperwash.asp>