



Media Release Attention News Editors

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For Immediate Release

President Audrey Poitras Sets the Record Straight

As President of the Métis Nation of Alberta, I had hoped that we had turned the page on the old politics of drive-by smears and groundless accusations.

Those who oppose me have now decided to take a shot at my strongest assets – my integrity, my accountability and my character.

The 80-year-old Métis Nation of Alberta remains strong and viable. After 11 years of my leadership, the MNA has increased from under 10,000 members to almost 45,000 members, from a \$5 million annual budget to over \$20 million annual budget, and has accumulated numerous assets.

My integrity and accountability has been confirmed by audited financial statements year after year by our members at our Annual Assemblies.

The MNA doors are open to a forensic audit, as our transparency is a fundamental part of our government. Earlier this year, and as part of the Federal Accountability Act and the Government's Blue Ribbon Panel on Grants and Contributions, the MNA, like other Aboriginal organizations, received a visit from the Auditor General who reviewed our books and interviewed our staff on all federal agreements that we have with Canada. Both our records and our record-keeping met with sound approval from the Auditor General Officials. The Provincial government has also always been welcome to examine our finances at any time.

We all know that when we rely on provincial and federal dollars; cash flow can become an issue. Most years we have to wait until at least the second half of the fiscal year before much of the funding we receive from the governments comes through. While this can be an inconvenience, our solid track record of fiscal management allows us to operate in an uninterrupted and viable manner.

It must be pointed out that right now we are experiencing a cash flow issue, not a deficit. The monthly expenditures include the operational costs of all six of our regions and our head office which includes Mr. Trevor Gladue's salary and travel. Principled people do not express strong positions about an issue with one hand, while accepting money from the same issue with the other hand.

There is a publication ban on the current Judiciary Council Proceedings, so it is difficult to go into detail. The Judiciary Council is an institution initiated by our members to protect the integrity of the Métis Nation of Alberta, part of an overall self governance model. Unlike others, as leader of the MNA I respect the internal system of the MNA, which includes this publication ban.

That being said I feel it is imperative that everyone understand that the matter before the Judiciary Council is a fundamental issue around conflict of interest. This is not a personal issue. I was asked to make a stand to protect the integrity of the MNA by four presidents of our six Regions and two vice presidents. I have received letters of support from members from all of our regions, including many very concerned Elders.

We need to let the Judiciary Council do their work and I am not prepared to argue the issues in the media. The Judiciary Council will be dealing with this on November 24 and 25th, and I will be able to discuss these issues further once a decision has been rendered.

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