



## **Press Release Attention News Editors**

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### **Alberta Court Upholds MNA Judiciary Council's Decision to Reprimand and Suspend Rick Boucher Until 2010**

#### **Metis Self-Government Institutions Respected and Vindicated**

Edmonton, AB (May 2, 2008) – Yesterday, the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta upheld the decision of the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) Judiciary Council to reprimand and suspend Rick Boucher, MNA Region 1 Vice President.

Justice M.A. Binder, of the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench concluded that the MNA Judiciary Council was within its "jurisdiction" in issuing its December 18, 2007, written decision that Mr. Boucher's actions were "gravely detrimental" to the Métis Nation and suspending him until 2010.

"The Alberta Court validated what our own Métis self-government institution, the MNA Judiciary Council, correctly confirmed back in December 2007. Namely, Métis leaders are elected to serve the interests of the Métis people, not their own self interest," said President Poitras.

The initial complaint against Mr. Boucher, to the MNA Judiciary Council, was filed in May 2007. It was grounded on MNA Provincial Council's unanimous motion (seconded by Boucher) to pursue a direct, bilateral agreement with Health Canada for the delivery of the Aboriginal Health Human Resource Initiative (AHHRI), as opposed to entering an unmanageable, unrealistic sub-agreement with the Métis National Council (MNC) for the delivery of this federal program.

In March 2007, unbeknownst to the MNA President, and the majority of Provincial Council, and MNA Region One Regional Council, Mr. Boucher negotiated and entered into an agreement with the MNC for the delivery of the same AHHRI funding through Metco Ventures Inc., a company privately owned by Boucher, as 100 per cent shareholder, at the signing of the agreement. The agreement provided for Metco Ventures Inc. to deliver Métis health programs in Alberta, rather than the MNA.

The MNA Judiciary Council found that Mr. Boucher "made a decision to use a company he controlled to take an agreement away from the MNA", that Mr. Boucher "owed a duty to the MNA" and that "he had no right to act on his own contrary to the motion" passed by the MNA Provincial Council in February 2007.

The MNA Judiciary Council also concluded that:

The MNA could not operate if every Councillor felt entitled to take information obtained through the MNA and then act on their own through companies preventing the MNA from proceeding with negotiating agreements when the Provincial Council had authorized the negotiation of such agreements. ...

Provincial Council members do not have the right to act on their own because they disagree with the MNA Executives or the MNA Provincial Council. ...

People in the position of Mr. Boucher as a member of the Provincial Council harm the integrity and credibility of the entire Métis Nation of Alberta by ignoring the process for governing affairs of the Provincial Council.

Based on these findings, the MNA Judiciary Council reprimanded and immediately suspended Mr. Boucher from the MNA Provincial Council and from holding specific positions in the MNA until December 18, 2010. Mr. Boucher rejected the jurisdiction and questioned the integrity of the Métis Nation to govern its own affairs by attempting to have the MNA Judiciary Council decision overturned by a non-Métis court. Yesterday, Mr. Boucher's attempts were completely rejected by that non-Métis court.

"It is now time that all members of the MNA Provincial Council focus their attention on doing what we were elected to do," President Poitras added. "We must now come together to push forward on our Métis rights agenda and to help Métis children, families and communities."

Marlene Lanz, MNA Region 3 President and Minister for Family and Wellness said, "I also hope the Métis National Council's President, Clem Chartier, and the former MNC Minister for Health, David Chartrand, understand what this judgment means. They should not have used the MNC and Métis health dollars as a way to interfere in politics in Alberta. They should have respected the MNA President and the MNA Provincial Council, rather than trying to pretend they know best for Alberta Métis."

Sylvia Johnson, MNA Region 6 President, added, "I am very pleased that we can finally put some closure on this issue. Now we need to get moving on the very necessary work that needs to be done for our Métis people to continue moving the Métis Nation forward. In my view, this was a triumph and a huge step towards Métis self-government when the Court of Queens Bench in the Province of Alberta recognized and upheld the decision of our Métis Judiciary Council."

"It has been truly sad that some elected Métis leaders have allowed the Alberta Government to use our internal conflicts as an excuse to ignore Métis priorities that our nation is facing. Métis harvesting rights, the Crown's duty to consult our communities, the housing needs of Métis families, the health and safety of our children and Elders.

These need to be the priorities of all members of the MNA Provincial Council. Not just positioning for an election in the fall,” said Cecil Bellrose, MNA Region 4 President. “I would like to congratulate President Poitras and the Judiciary Council for remaining steady throughout this process.”

Karen Collins, MNA Region 2 President added, “While it is unfortunate that so much time and energy has been dedicated to deal with Mr. Boucher’s actions: the principle that elected Métis leadership must be accountable and act honourably on behalf of the Métis people was something worth fighting for. Métis citizens should expect nothing less than what other Canadians expect of their elected leadership.”

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