

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)  
New Brunswick Monthly Meeting  
Ellen Helmuth, Clerk  
150 Chapel Street  
Woodstock, NB E7M 1H4

October 18, 2021

Hon. Hugh J. A. (Ted) Flemming, Attorney General  
Department of Justice and Public Safety  
Government of New Brunswick  
P. O. Box 6000  
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1

Attorney General Flemming;

Re: Indigenous Land Acknowledgments

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in New Brunswick has long allied itself with the full recognition of the Wolastoqey, Mi'kmaq, and Peskotomuhkati right to land and access to resources. Toward this end, Quakers endeavour to be active participants in the Truth and Reconciliation process.

We are writing to add the voice of our faith-based community to the rising chorus of those calling for the retraction of your memo forbidding government employees to mention unceded or unsurrendered land in making land acknowledgments. We are shocked by the denial that we are on unceded territory and saddened by the damage this memo will have on the Truth and Reconciliation process in New Brunswick. Instead of continuing to deny the truth of the colonization of Indigenous lands and the marginalization of Indigenous people we suggest embracing the spirit of reconciliation by first apologizing and then proposing to embark on the long road together toward a comprehensive land claim settlement.

The Peace and Friendship Treaties are constitutionally recognized under section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1982. These are the treaties that are still in place.

Governments have the moral and legal duty to work and negotiate in good faith. This is a time when moral leadership is of paramount importance. The first step in the process of Truth and Reconciliation is the admission of truth. This is a call to rise to the occasion of such leadership and work toward respect and justice for Indigenous people.

In Friendship,

Ellen Helmuth, Clerk  
New Brunswick Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.  
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CC. Premier Blaine Higgs