



Nycole Turmel, MP, Députée
Interim Leader of the Official Opposition / Chef intérimaire de l'Opposition officielle
New Democratic Party / Nouveau Parti démocratique

December 7, 2011

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Re: Attawapiskat State of Emergency

Dear Prime Minister Harper,

It has been almost a month since the Attawapiskat First Nation took the extraordinary step of asking the federal government to recognize a state of emergency in their community.

I have seen first-hand how hundreds of families are living in garden sheds and tents, with no running water or electricity. These families are worried about surviving the cold winter that has already come to Attawapiskat.

I have met with the residents of Attawapiskat, and they are asking that appropriate federal resources be dedicated to alleviating this crisis. There is no time to waste.

Last week, the federal government put the community under third-party management, and assumed full responsibility for solving the crisis. As of this week, however, there are still families living in completely inadequate conditions.

Moving supplies into this community to alleviate the housing crisis will require an extraordinary level of co-ordination. Given the extreme weather conditions and the fact that the winter road will not be ready for nearly two months, the community is seeking coordinated logistical help. For this reason, they have asked me to convey that they are asking for military support to help in the response.

Our military has played an incredible role at times of other humanitarian crises in Canada. I am sure that you will agree that the conditions facing people in Attawapiskat are dire and likely to get worse as the winter sets in. Therefore I am asking you today to act immediately and target resources, including military resources as requested by the community, towards building adequate housing in Attawapiskat. You will have the full support of the New Democratic Party in this effort.

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Attawapiskat families require heated housing, clean drinking water, and urgent medical care. The situation is grave and if the community does not receive help, lives will be at risk.

This is a moment when we can come together as Parliamentarians to respond to a tragic situation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nycole Turmel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nycole Turmel, M.P.
Leader of the Official Opposition
Leader of Canada's New Democrats

cc: Hon. John Duncan, Minister
Charlie Angus, M.P.
Linda Duncan, M.P.