

CHEF DE L'OPPOSITION OFFICIELLE  
NOUVEAU PARTI DÉMOCRATIQUE DU CANADA



LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION  
NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

*Thomas Mulcair, Député/M.P.*  
*Outremont*

O T T A W A  
December 18, 2012

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

Dear Prime Minister,

Your sincere commitment in dealing with the 2008 apology for the residential schools tragedy is what gives me hope in writing to you today.

Across Canada, First Nations are organizing and reacting strongly to continuing inequality and to a new injustice that could deprive them of their inherent right to continue to hunt and fish on their traditional lands and waters.

From coast to coast to coast an unprecedented wave of grassroots action is sweeping across First Nations communities. There have already been over a hundred public rallies, organized locally, in particular by young people frustrated by the systemic inequality that persists in our country.

They are also protesting the repeated imposition on Aboriginal peoples, without meaningful prior consultation, of federal legislation removing protection for the land and waters they depend upon to exercise their inherent rights to hunt and fish. The most recent example is the adoption just last week of changes set out in Bill C-45.

When you met with First Nations leaders less than a year ago, you committed your government to working in partnership with First Nations Canadians. The #IdleNoMore protests are proof that Aboriginal Canadians are demanding you fulfill that solemn commitment.

New Democrats believe that constitutionally required consultation is more than a means to an end. It is a demonstration of reconciliation, a continuing effort to bring together First Nations and other Canadians. The many protestors, young and old, who are gathering at rallies across Canada want their government to act honourably towards that goal of reconciliation.

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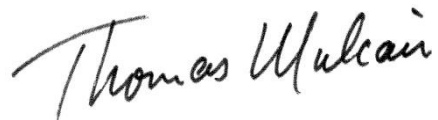
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As you know, Chief Theresa Spence of Attawapiskat First Nation has also embarked on a hunger strike, living in a tipi on the Anishinabe traditional territory of Victoria Island in the Ottawa River, barely a kilometer from Parliament. I ask that you please act swiftly to avoid a personal tragedy for Chief Spence.

Just as importantly, let us all work together to find the best path towards justice for the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.

I look forward to your early positive response to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas Mulcair". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair, P.C., M.P. (Outremont)  
Leader of the Official Opposition  
New Democratic Party of Canada