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**DOGRIB RAE BAND COUNCIL  
PRESS RELEASE**

CHIEF EDD~~ER~~ ERASMUS OF THE DOGRIB RAE BAND SUPPORTS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO CONSULT THE PUBLIC AND TO DEVELOP A CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSAL FOR A WESTERN TERRITORY.

"THE DOGRIB PEOPLE HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR WAYS TO DEFINE AND ENTRENCH OUR POLITICAL RIGHTS FOR SOME TIME, AND THIS COMMISSION IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET THE BALL ROLLING RIGHT NOW"

CHIEF ERASMUS IS CALLING ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY TO SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMISSION AND TO PROVIDE IT WITH ENOUGH FUNDS TO INITIATE THIS IMPORTANT WORK.

A COMMITTEE OF WESTERN POLITICAL LEADERS INCLUDING MLA'S, THE DENE NATION, THE INUVIALUIT REGIONAL CORPORATION, THE METIS ASSOCIATION OF THE NWT, THE GWICH'IN TRIBAL COUNCIL AND THE SAHTU DENE/METIS COUNCIL HAS DRAFTED A TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A COMMISSION FOR CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD REPLACE THE FORMER CONSTITUTIONAL ALLIANCE OF THE NWT AND THE WESTERN CONSTITUTIONAL FORUM. THE COMMISSION WOULD BE AN INCORPORATED BODY INDEPENDENT OF GOVERNMENT. IT WOULD BE COMPRISED OF FOUR PEOPLE WHO HAVE EARNED THE RESPECT OF NORTHERN RESIDENTS BUT WHO ARE NOT POLITICAL LEADERS. SUCH A GROUP WILL BE ABLE TO GET TO WORK IMMEDIATELY AND WILL NOT BE AFFECTED BY UPCOMING ELECTIONS FOR THE LEGISLATIVE

ASSEMBLY AND THE MAJOR ABORIGINAL ORGANIZATIONS.

"SELF GOVERNMENT IS AN IMPORTANT TOPIC. PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITIES WILL BE EAGER TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROCESS. CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS IMPORTANT IN ITS OWN RIGHT, BUT IT IS ALSO AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARDS THE SETTLEMENT OF LAND CLAIMS"

IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THE COMMISSION WOULD BE ESTABLISHED IN MAY, AND BE READY TO SUBMIT A PRELIMINARY PROGRESS REPORT BY DECEMBER OF THIS YEAR.

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For further information contact:

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