



Gwich'in Council

P.O. Box 2570 Inuvik NT X0E 0T0
Phone: 1 403 979 3344 Fax: 1 403 979 3090

TABLED DOCUMENT NO. 14-13(4) TABLED ON NOV 29 1996

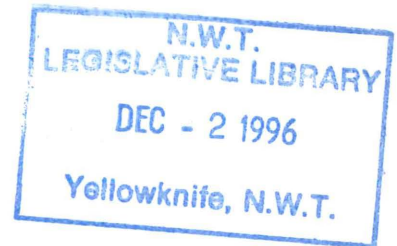


October 30, 1996

**Hon. Don Morin
Premier of the NWT
Government of the NWT
Yellowknife NT**

**Hon. John Todd
Minister of Finance
Government of the NWT
Yellowknife NT**

**Hon. Kelvin Ng
Minister of Health and Social Services
Government of the NWT
Yellowknife NT**



Dear People who represent the Gwich'in and other people in the NWT:

I would like to draw your attention to the **attached letter** which I have sent to the Gwich'in Tribal Council with regards to the matter of the **Inuvik Transient Center**.

As you may be aware, Chii Construction Ltd. and Maureen Morffit submitted a joint proposal for this regional service based out of Inuvik.

Chii Construction is a community based corporation established by the Inuvik Native Band to pursue economic ventures that will provide training and employment to local people.

Maureen Morffit is a northerner and has been running the transient center in Inuvik for the last eight years and has extensive experience in providing this service.

I would like to draw your attention to 10.1.1 of the Gwich'in Agreement wherein it states that *government (GNWT and Canada) economic development programs in the settlement area shall take into account*



Gwich'in Council

P.O. Box 2570 Inuvik NT X8E 0H0
Phone: 1 413 979 3344 Fax: 1 403 979 3090

that the Gwich'in should be economically self-sufficient.

While we have made some great strides over the last few years, it appears we have a lot to learn and are nowhere near being self sufficient.

If we are self sufficient, we shall be less of a demand on the social services provided by government.

To achieve self-sufficiency, the Gwich'in must be economically self-sufficient.

The Gwich'in have come a long way in this area.

But, if our government continues to award small local contracts to southern based firms, it defeats the purpose of attempting to become self-sufficient.

Chii and Maureen will provide employment and training to no less than six Gwich'in who would otherwise be unemployed .

10.1.2 of the Gwich'in Agreement further states *that government shall assist in the development of commercially viable Gwich'in businesses and enterprises, and when necessary, identify possible sources of financial assistance.*

No where in this does it state that government shall assist in the development of commercially viable **southern businesses** and enterprises, and when necessary, identify possible sources of financial assistance.

10.1.3 of the Gwich'in Agreement further states that *Government shall meet with the Gwich'in Tribal Council not less that once every three years to review the effectiveness of programs relating to the objectives in 10.1.1.*

This has not happened since December 22, 1992, when the Gwich'in Agreement came into effect and was forever entrenched into the



Gwich'in Council

P.O. Box 2570 Inuvik, NT X0T 0T0
Phone: 1 403 979 3344 Fax: 1 403 979 4000

Canadian Constitution thereby giving the provisions of the agreement the highest form of protection in this country... good or bad, it matters not. What matters is that it is done.

For any government to contravene the provisions of the agreement means that the Canadian Constitution is useless and without force.

It is imperative that the Government of the NWT, the Government of Canada and the Government of the Gwich'in meet as soon as possible to discuss the provisions of chapter 10 and how we are going to collectively implement these provisions to ensure that the Gwich'in become economically self-sufficient.

I will be bringing this matter to the attention of the Executive of the Gwich'in Tribal Council and I will be suggesting an urgent meeting to discuss the Inuvik Transient Center and the provisions of chapter 10 of the Gwich'in Agreement.

In the meantime, I will await a response from the Government of the NWT why Chii Construction and Maureen Morffit were not short listed and given the opportunity to provide this valuable service which we have no doubt we can economically and efficiently complete with no sweat in the arctic where the contract should remain.

I will be requesting the drastic action from the Executive of the Gwich'in Tribal Council in this most important and crucial matter.

I should add that the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the three Gwich'in communities fully supported Chii and Maureen's efforts in obtaining this contract.

James B. Firth
Chief, Inuvik Native Band