



Media Release

Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI

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Attention News Editors:

For Immediate Release

Mi'kmaq Chiefs to lead public information sessions on changes to Bill C-45

SUMMERSIDE, PEI - January 24 2013 – Chief Darlene Bernard of Lennox Island First Nation and Chief Brian Francis of Abegweit First Nation will host four information sessions to better outline Federal Government amendments to numerous pieces of legislation as a result of Bill C-45, which will have long-lasting negative impacts on First Nations, and Canadians as a whole.

The meetings are being offered as an opportunity to share more detailed information on the significant changes that are included in the large omnibus bill known as Bill C-45. Included in the bill are fundamental changes to the Indian Act, Fisheries Act, Navigable Waters Protection Act, Employment Insurance Act and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. The Chiefs say many of these changes are an affront to Aboriginal and treaty rights and will have significant impacts on all Canadians.

“The new definition of Aboriginal Fisheries within the Fisheries Act excludes the Supreme Court of Canada affirmed treaty right to fish and

sell for a “moderate livelihood” said Chief Francis. “That is unconstitutional and we will not stand for it.”

Chief Bernard also pointed out that the Federal Government has a well established constitutional duty to consult with First Nations when a crown action or decision may adversely impact on Aboriginal or treaty rights. She said that did not happen.

“To add further insult, not five months ago Aboriginal Affairs Minister John Duncan was in PEI to sign a tri-lateral Consultation Agreement yet the Federal Crown has not honoured its obligation to consult with the PEI Mi’kmaq or any First Nations across the country,” said Chief Bernard.

The Chiefs say recent public events, organized by youth members of PEI Mi’kmaq communities and attended by hundreds of Islanders, demonstrate the public desire to better understand the issues facing First Nations in Canada, as well as all Canadians

Both chiefs said the meetings will also provide the opportunity for community members (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) to ask questions and seek further clarification about the changes in the Bill, as well as to gain a better understanding of how PEI First Nations will challenge the Bill.

“This is a very complex issue and people across Prince Edward Island want the opportunity to learn more about how Prime Minister Harper and his Government are treating the people in this country,” said Chief Francis.

All meetings are open to the public. The schedule for the meetings is as follows:

January 29 – Lennox Island – John J Sark Memorial School Auditorium
2:00pm

January 29 – Summerside – Loyalist Country Inn – 6:00pm

January 30 – Scotchfort – Mawiomi Centre – 2:00pm

January 30 – Charlottetown – Murphy’s Community Centre – 6:00pm

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