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PEI Chiefs Congratulate new National Chief Perry Bellegarde

Charlottetown, PEI, December 11, 2014 ---

The Chiefs of Prince Edward Island's Mi'kmaq governments are congratulating Perry Bellegarde on his election as National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

"These are significant times for First Nations across the country," said Abegweit First Nation Chief Brian Francis. "Chief Bellegarde knows the importance of asserting our right to benefit from resources and land use within our territories and he will ensure that this issue is prominent in the national debate."

The Supreme Court of Canada decision in Tsilhqot'in has provided clarity regarding the rights of First Nations related to benefiting from the resources and land use within their unceded traditional lands. Tsilhqot'in establishes that the duty of the Crown goes beyond consultation, and must include consent in areas that are subject to Aboriginal title.

"I am pleased that the Assembly of First Nations, and our new National Chief Perry Bellegarde, have reaffirmed the call for a National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls," said Lennox Island Chief Matilda Ramjattan. "I look forward to working with National Chief Bellegarde and Chiefs across the country to ensure that the issues of Aboriginal and treaty rights and the call for a National Inquiry stay at the forefront."

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is a national advocacy organization representing First Nation citizens in Canada, which includes more than 900,000 people living in 634 First Nation communities and in cities and towns across the country.

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Additional Information:

The term "First Nations" refers to one of three distinct groups recognized as "Aboriginal" in the *Constitution Act* of 1982. The other two distinct groups characterized as "Aboriginal" are the Métis and the Inuit.

Among other roles, the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI serves as a Provincial-Territorial Organization affiliated with the Assembly of First Nations.

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