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**For Immediate Release**



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### **Statement on behalf the Epekwitk Assembly of Councils**

On behalf of the Epekwitk Assembly of Councils, Chief Darlene Bernard and Chief Junior Gould issued the following statement regarding the protest currently underway at the Confederation Bridge:

“We understand that the grass roots protest currently underway at the Confederation Bridge is peaceful and is not intended to block traffic on or off the Island. We support our Mi’kmaq people in raising awareness and showing support for our sisters and brothers across the country.

The issue related to the Wet’suwet’en and the CGL pipeline is complex. We respect the environmental concerns raised by the Wet’suwet’en hereditary Chiefs and we also acknowledge and respect the decisions made by over twenty First Nations, including most Wet’suwet’en First Nations, that have signed impact benefits agreements with CGL and currently support the pipeline. We also respect the authority and decision-making process of the Wet’suwet’en people.

Most importantly we believe that this issue should be resolved peacefully, without violence and within the law. We urge continued dialogue between all parties.

What Islanders and Canadians need to understand is that these protests happening across the country and now in PEI are about more than just the Wet’suwet’en situation, they are about centuries of Canada’s Indigenous people being denied access to the land and resources, they are about centuries of economic and social marginalization. The Mi’kmaq of PEI and the Provincial Government have taken great strides recently towards reconciliation and we intend to continue on that path. The rule of law in Canada includes the respect and recognition of Aboriginal and treaty rights.”

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