



The following is distributed by L'nuey on behalf of the Epekwitk Assembly of Councils

For Immediate Release



Charlottetown, Epekwitk/PEI – 24 February 2025

PEI Mi'kmaq Reach Historic Milestone with Proposed Settlement of Hog Island Specific Claim

The Abegweit and Lennox Island First Nation Councils have accepted an offer from Canada to settle the Hog Island Specific Claim, which was first filed in 1996.

The term "specific claims", refers to claims made by a First Nation against the federal government which relate to the administration of land and other First Nation assets and to the fulfilment of historic treaties and other agreements. The objective of the federal government's Specific Claims Policy is to discharge its lawful obligation for these grievances. Specific claims are completely different than comprehensive land title claims.

The Hog Island Claim arose from a purchase of lands in 1942 by Canada for the purpose of adding the lands to the Lennox Island Band reserve. Canada failed to do this, and the specific claim was filed for breach of Canada's fiduciary duty in failing to do so. The Lennox Island Band divided in 1972 to create the Abegweit Band. Because the breach predated the division of the Bands, this specific claim is a joint claim for both PEI Bands.

A settlement agreement is not finalized until it is successfully ratified by a community vote. A date for the vote has not yet been set. The settlement amount that will be voted on is \$17.5 million. The offer represents compensation for the loss of use of the lands and compensation for replacement reserve lands, should the Councils choose to purchase them. If this Agreement is successfully ratified by the communities, it will be the first specific claim settled in PEI. No details have been released as to the structure and intended use of the settlement. Both Councils have confirmed that a range of options will be discussed over the coming weeks.

"This is exciting news for the Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq. We have been working hard to resolve this Specific Claim since it was first accepted by Canada for negotiations in 2007. There is still work to do but this is an important moment. Whether it is co-management agreements over protected lands, acknowledgements of the importance of Mi'kmaw history and culture in Epekwitk or the settlement of specific claims like this, they are all steps in our reconciliation journey, and we need to celebrate them all," said Chief Darlene Bernard.

Chief Junior Gould added, "After almost 30 years of effort, it is gratifying to be able to bring this settlement to our communities for ratification. We never gave up on this claim and we are pleased to finally be nearing a conclusion. While the process isn't completed yet, we have reached a critical milestone. We see this as just the beginning – we are actively working on more specific claims through L'nuey and our Councils will continue to push for resolution of these past wrongs as well. This is a significant achievement for our communities."

Media contact: Sean Doke, Communications Coordinator, L'nuey, sdoke@lnuey.ca