

UNCLASSIFIED - ON4324

FUNDING FOR THE NEW SCHOOL AT THE ATTAWAPISKAT FIRST NATION

(Information for the Associate Deputy Minister)

DATE

- November 13, 2007

PURPOSE

- To provide you with an update on funding for the new school at the Attawapiskat First Nation.

SUMMARY

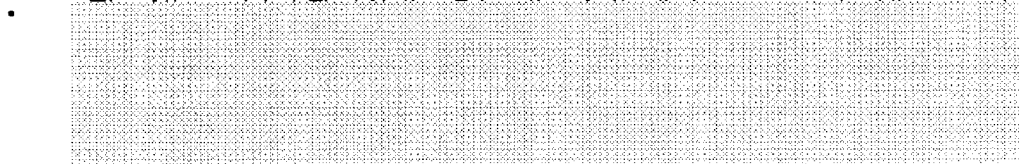
- You are being asked to respond to lobbyist Leonard Domino & Associates Incorporated, to discuss funding approval for the new elementary school at the Attawapiskat First Nation.
- The First Nation wants to construct a new elementary school to provincial standards, as opposed to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's school space accommodation standards. This will result in the construction of a larger school. The First Nation intends to secure bank financing for the costs over and above the school space accommodation standards.
- On September 26, 2007, the First Nation was told that the school is not in the Long Term Five-Year Capital Plan due to other priorities and that the Minister does not have the authority to provide a guarantee for infrastructure projects.
- Another barrier is that the First Nation wants the Department to pay the interest as well as pay higher tuition rates for a longer period of time to service the debt.
- The First Nation is to proceed with the funding approval process in preparation for funds becoming available in the future if and when the school is placed on the Long Term Five-Year Capital Plan. The school will be reconsidered for inclusion on the Capital Plan after the water projects and other more pressing funding pressures have been addressed.
- The Region stated that it would be willing to work with the First Nation to explore alternative financing options. The nature of the alternative financing options cannot be determined at this time. Departmental officials have repeatedly stated that funding is not currently available within the Region for a new school.
- The Department should proceed with preliminary project approval process in preparation of presenting this project to Treasury Board for their consideration some time in the future.

BACKGROUND

- The Attawapiskat First Nation Education Authority, by way of a Band Council Resolution, closed the community's elementary school on May 11, 2000, due to health and safety concerns related to fuel contamination. After examining several options, a decision was made to build portables as a temporary solution to delivering the elementary education program.
- The First Nation wants to construct a new elementary school to provincial standards, as opposed to the Department's school space accommodation

standards. This will result in the construction of a larger school. The First Nation intends to secure bank financing for the costs over and above the school space accommodation standards.

- The Department provided \$194,718 to the First Nation in 2006-2007, to prepare a School Capital Planning Study. The study has been completed and will provide the information required for the preparation of funding approval documents and a Treasury Board submission, in the event that the school is placed on the Long Term Capital Plan.



s.20(1)(b)

- On September 26, 2007, Leigh Jessen, Associate Regional Director General—North, and Marc Brooks, Director General, met with Attawapiskat First Nation, Leonard Domino and Associates and B. H. Martin Architects. The group was seeking a Ministerial Guarantee on a bank loan in the amount of \$30 million which would allow the First Nation to construct a new elementary school.
- They were told that the school is not on the Long Term Capital Plan and that the Minister does not have the authority to provide a guarantee for infrastructure projects.

CURRENT STATUS

- The First Nation and the Department have agreed upon the floor area that is eligible for funding, and the Ontario Region is awaiting the final version of the feasibility study.
- Leonard Domino has recently called you to ask for your support for the school project.

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UNCLASSIFIED – ON4324

- On October 31, 2007, the Ontario Region returned the call to Leonard Domino who said that he wanted to inform you that the First Nation is willing to utilize the Alternative to School Capital Funding model, which would spread the cost of the school over a number of years, and further, that their bank has provided an approval-in-principle for this approach.
- Ontario Region has repeatedly informed Mr. Domino and the First Nation that the Department would not enter into an Alternative to School Capital Funding model.

CONSIDERATIONS

- The Attawapiskat First Nation School is not on the Ontario Region's Long-term Major Capital Plan due to increased funding pressures and regional priorities for water. The elementary school program is currently being delivered in portable classrooms and the high school, with no risk to the health and safety of the students.

NEXT STEPS

- The Ontario Region is willing to work with the First Nation to explore alternative financing options in conjunction with a Treasury Board submission. The nature of the alternative financing options cannot be determined at this time.
- The Ontario Region advises that the Department should proceed with preliminary project approval process in preparation of presenting this project to Treasury Board for their consideration some time in the future. The preliminary project approval process will provide the Department with the authority to fund the design stage, including site investigation work, and will form the basis of the submission to Treasury Board.

RECOMMENDATION

- It is recommended that you return the phone call to Mr. Len Domino and deliver the messages below.

KEY MESSAGES

- The Department is willing to work with the First Nation to explore alternative financing options but the current system does not allow much room for innovation.

- The First Nation is to proceed with the funding approval process in preparation for funds becoming available in the future if and when the school is placed on the Long Term Five-Year Capital Plan.
- The Attawapiskat First Nation School is not on the Ontario Region's Long Term Capital Plan due to increased funding pressures and regional priorities for water.
- The school will be reconsidered for inclusion on the Capital Plan after the water projects and other more pressing funding pressures have been addressed.
- The Minister does not have the authority to provide a guarantee for infrastructure projects.

ORIGINATOR:

Brian Holm/ON/FSN/(807) 624-1549/ms
Revised by Sean Stuckless

Date created: March 14, 2007
Updated on November 8, 2007

Cidm 156450

FUNDING FOR THE NEW SCHOOL AT THE ATTAWAPISKAT FIRST NATION

(Information for Associate Deputy Minister)

DATE

November 22, 2007

PURPOSE

To provide you with a summary of correspondence and meetings held related to funding for the new school at the Attawapiskat First Nation.

SUMMARY

- On November 22, 2005, the former Regional Director General for Ontario (RDG) met with the First Nation following a verbal commitment from former Minister Andy Scott to seriously examine funding a new elementary school in the community.
- In a letter dated December 5, 2005, from the former RDG, details about how a new school may potentially be funded are outlined. Specifically, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) would provide the First Nation with an enhanced tuition agreement as the school was not in the Long Term Five-Year Capital Plan.
- On September 26, 2007, the First Nation was told again that the J. R. Nakogee School is not in the Long Term Five-Year Capital Plan due to other priorities and that the Minister does not have the authority to provide a Ministerial Loan Guarantee for major capital projects. Correspondence of December 4, 2006 from the former Minister states that the Minister was not prepared to provide the lender with a Ministerial Loan Guarantee prior to Treasury Board approval.
- Another barrier is that the First Nation wants the Department to pay the interest costs as well as pay higher tuition rates for a longer period of time to service the debt.
- The First Nation is to proceed with the funding approval process in preparation for funds becoming available in the future if and when the school is placed on the Long Term Five-Year Capital Plan. The school will be reconsidered for inclusion on the Capital Plan after the water projects and other more pressing funding pressures have been addressed.
- The Ontario Region has continually worked with the First Nation to explore alternative financing options. Departmental officials have repeatedly stated that funding is not currently available within the Region for a new school beyond the discussed alternative tuition model which would not likely be enough money to cover a \$30 million loan.
- The Department should proceed with preliminary project approval process in preparation of presenting this project to Treasury Board for its consideration at some time in the future.

BACKGROUND

- The Attawapiskat First Nation Education Authority, by way of a Band Council Resolution, closed the community's elementary school on May 11, 2000, due to health and safety concerns related to fuel contamination. After examining several options, a decision was made to build portables as a temporary solution to delivering the elementary education program.
- The Department provided \$194,718 to the First Nation in 2006-2007, to prepare a School Capital Planning Study. The study is undergoing final revisions and will provide the information required for the preparation of funding approval documents and a Treasury Board submission, in the event that the school is placed on the Long Term

Capital Plan.

- Principle and interest on the loan would be retired, as funds were made available on the Ontario Region's Long Term Capital Plan.
- On November 22, 2005 the former Regional Director General (RDG) Ontario met with the Attawapiskat First Nation Education Authority and their advisors. (Refer to Annex A - Follow up letter of December 5, 2005, which summarizes commitments made at the meeting.)
- On February 8, 2006, the Director of Funding Services North and Manager of Capital North met with the Chief, the Education Director and their advisors in Timmins, Ontario, to discuss the funding approval process. The First Nation presented a proposal to use a bank loan to bridge finance the construction in order to start the project as soon as possible. INAC could not commit to this alternative method of financing since Treasury Board approval of the project had not been granted. An interim funding request for a gravel haul was also denied.
- On April 12, 2006, Ontario regional officials met with the First Nation Education Authority and the School Capital Planning study consultant at B.H. Martin Architect's office in Timmins, Ontario. The Director of Funding Services North stated that the Alternate to School Capital funding regime did not apply in this case. He also clarified that the RDG wrote that there is a process to follow in order to obtain funding approval.
- On July 5, 2006, the Attawapiskat First Nation Education Authority (AFNEA) made a presentation to the Associate Regional Director General North and Director of Funding Services in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Issues presented were: funding for the new school, the addition to reserve application, and the demolition of the old elementary school.
- On September 13, 2006, the former Minister met with the First Nation in Timmins.
- On November 29, 2006, Ontario regional officials met with the Attawapiskat First Nation in Toronto to receive a copy of the study and to continue to discuss financing options and the implementation schedule.
- The First Nation expects to negotiate an Alternative to Education Capital Approach with INAC to allow them to construct its own school. Tuition savings and interim bank financing would be required for this approach. A draft tuition proposal provided by the First Nation showed a cost per student above acceptable education funding levels. Another financing option is a rental agreement between the First Nation and INAC. Under this approach the Department (or a private investor) would construct the school and the First Nation would pay an annual rental fee to the owner. Should the First Nation seek to increase the size or the scope of the project, it will need to do so by creating partnerships.
- On March 23, 2007, the Associate Regional Director General North, Director of Funding Services, Manager of Capital and technical support staff met with the Attawapiskat First Nation Education Authority, Mr. Len Domino, Mr. Barry Martin and Mr. Bill Blake to discuss enrolment projections and their effect on school size. The Associate Regional Director General North did not accept the First Nation's arguments for increased enrolments due to DeBeers and families returning to Attawapiskat. She also requested that tuition agreements be removed from the table, since they do not apply.
- On June 19, 2007, the Attawapiskat First Nation Education Authority met with Ontario regional officials in Thunder Bay, Ontario. The Associate Regional Director General

North and Director Funding Services North sent their regrets. First Nation advisors in attendance were Mr. Leonard Domino, Mr. Rory Demetriooff, Mr. Bill Blake, and Mr. Barry Martin. The main topic of discussion was the size of the new school. INAC agreed to include additional area for an evacuation centre, but not extra space for special education, without Director approval.

- On September 26, 2007, Associate Regional Director General North, and Marc Brooks, Director General, met with the Attawapiskat First Nation, Leonard Domino and Associates and B. H. Martin Architects. The group was seeking a Ministerial Guarantee on a bank loan in the amount of \$30 million, which would allow the First Nation to construct a new elementary school.
- They were told that the school is not on the Long Term Capital Plan and that you do not have the authority to provide a guarantee for capital projects.
- On October 31, 2007, the Ontario Region returned the call to Mr. Leonard Domino who said that he wanted to inform INAC that the First Nation is willing to utilize the Alternative to School Capital Funding model, which would spread the cost of the school over a number of years, and further, that their bank has provided an approval-in-principle for this approach.
- The Ontario Region has repeatedly informed Mr. Domino and the First Nation that the Department would not enter into an Alternative to School Capital Funding model and that a Tuition Agreement does not apply in this case.
- Mr. Leonard Domino e-mailed Mr. Neil Yeates, Associate Deputy Minister on November 16, 2007, as a follow up to their teleconference on November 15, 2007, to provide the Associate Deputy Minister with evidence of INAC's support for the school project. The former RDG's December 5, 2005 letter in particular provides "a summation of INAC's commitments and related understandings" which were discussed at a November 22, 2005 meeting.

CURRENT STATUS

- The Ontario Region is awaiting the final version of the feasibility study.
- The Attawapiskat First Nation School is not on the Ontario Region's Long Term Five Year Major Capital Plan due to increased funding pressures and regional priorities for water. The elementary school program is currently being delivered in portable classrooms and the high school, with no risk to the health and safety of elementary students.

s.20(1)(b)

NEXT STEPS

- The Ontario Region is willing to work with the First Nation to explore alternative financing options in conjunction with a Treasury Board submission. The nature of the alternative financing options cannot be determined at this time.

- The Ontario Region advises that the First Nation should proceed with the preliminary project approval process in preparation of presenting this project to Treasury Board for its consideration some time in the future. The preliminary project approval will provide the Department with the authority to fund the design stage, including site investigation work, and will form the basis of the submission to Treasury Board.

ORIGINATOR:

Brian Holm/ON/FSN/(807) 624-1549/aw

Date created: November 19, 2007

Annexes: Annex A - Correspondence Concerning Attawapiskat School

Annex A

REGIONAL

Date	Author	Subject
August 3, 2007	Brian Holm	Agreement reached on size of new school.
July 30, 2007	Brian Holm	Outstanding conditions for funding approval.
December 29, 2006	Brian Holm	INAC's interpretation of RDG's December 5, 2006 letter. Reference made to Minister's December 4, 2006 letter. Attachment detailing outstanding conditions for approval.
March 27, 2006	J. Young	Details of the funding approval process.
March 28, 2006	R. Howsam	Funding approval process including requirement for Treasury Board authority.
February 11, 2006	J. Young	Follow up to February 8, 2006 meeting in Timmins, Ontario.
December 5, 2005	R. Howsam	INAC commitments made during a meeting held on November 22, 2005.

MINISTERIAL

December 4, 2006	Response to June 27, 2006 to Premier of Ontario and September 20, 2006 and October 11, 2006 letters to the Minister. Follow up to September 13, 2006, meeting in Timmins, Ontario and outlined conditions for funding approval including Treasury Board approval and next steps in INAC's Funding approval process.
May 6, 2005	Response to proposal concerning the replacement of The J.R. Nakogee School. Outlined next steps in funding approval process.

From: Susan Bertrand
Sent: 1/28/2008 3:52:32 PM
To: Greg Coleman
CC:
BCC:
Subject: Storyline - Attawapiskat School

Greg,

I'd like your backing to send the following information up to Diane L., and am wondering if we should get Deborah's as well.

In order to provide MO with guidance with respect to responding to media comments on Attawapiskat, Diane has requested info which will provide the facts around the First Nation's insistence that commitments have been made by three former Ministers.

The content below is taken from dockets and responses which have already been sent by previous Ministers' Offices. There's also a few references to media interviews.

Diane is looking for this info ASAP.

In terms of substantiation of commitments by former Ministers, according to briefing notes, dockets, and media reports, here's what we've managed to come up with:

May 6, 2005 - Letter from former Minister Scott to Chief Carpenter indicating Department is prepared to continue with the community's school project and has approved funding for a school capital planning study. (Interpretation by FN could be that of support by INAC)

June 13, 2005 - Letters to FN students saying "...the situation will continue while plans are being made for a new school. And...I appreciate your patience while we develop the new school."

Charlie Angus statement on Kashechewan Task Force, MP's web page, "summer 2005": "(Andy) Scott has signalled a willingness to address the need for a new school in Attawapiskat Angus said he is hopeful that a new school in Attawapiskat will finally be realized. We will be meeting with the Minister in early September to finalize plans on the school. Minister Scott has indicated a willingness to work with the communities and I will be working closely with his office to ensure that we move forward on these issues."

Interview, Timmins Daily Press, August 20, 2005:

The Daily Press (TDP): Thank you for this, Mr. Scott. There has been much anticipation among the Northern First Nations for your visit. So far, one of the main issues has been the Attawapiskat school situation. Does the federal government have anything planned?

Andy Scott (AS): Absolutely. (We want to) accelerate the discussions that are going on between (the First Nations) and the department. We are committed to the school and we have a process that as a department we must go through relative to the Treasury Board and so on. It just becomes a question of giving it the kind of intensity that would have this happen more quickly than otherwise. But let there be no mistake - the Government of Canada is committed to and in the process of the process that would see the construction of the school

TDP: So basically you have no idea on a ballpark timeframe for this to take place?

AS: Because we're here, because of our commitment to this project, my personal commitment to this project, all I would say is that whatever it would normally take, it will take a little less than that. I knew when I came here that this would be one of the issues that came up and we will meet that challenge, and we will get this done."

August 24, 2005 - Letter to Cliff Whillfred from Minister Scott, indicating that INAC is prepared to continue with the funding approval process for a new school, and the Department has already approved funding for a school capital planning study.

October 2, 2005 - Letter to a Ms. Freymond, Attawapiskat Education Authority: *Same commitment as above.*

Wawatay News, 17 Nov 05: "Timmins-James Bay MP Charlie Angus and MPP Gilles Bisson announced plans for

the new school, Nov. 11, which will meet the standard of those built across the province. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada will fund the education facility While Bisson said the school is long overdue, the timing of INAC's announcement didn't surprise him....." (Note no attribution for statements associated with INAC)

December 4, 2006 - Letter from Minister Prentice to Chief Carpenter indicating "I plan to support your funding request at the Treasury Board, but I am not prepared to provide the lender with a Ministerial Loan Guarantee....."

In addition to the above, a letter from the First Nation to former Minister Nault on September 14, 2000 also makes mention of hosting the former Minister in Attawapiskat "during the elections for the Grand Chief of the Nishnawbe-aski Nation (NAN) in July." Later, the letter states that "When you made your remarks during the NAN assembly about our new school, it was not our understanding that it would begin after ten years. Our expectation is that the school would be operational within two to three years."

We cannot find any documentation to substantiate the former Minister's statements. Further, in "Press Lines" dated April 18, 2001, written to support an interview with CBC Sudbury, there is an "If Pressed" line "regarding the alleged Ministerial commitment of a school in three years." The line indicates that Ontario Region is not aware of any such commitment.

Susan

From: Gus Foresto
To: Joseph Young; Paul Mountjoy
Date: Wednesday, November 21, 2007 3:41:59 PM
Subject: SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION ASK

Paul

After discussions with Joe/Richard/Art/myself , I have made revisions to the existing information contained in CIDM # 198761.

Gus

CC: Art Mauro; Richard Earl

Priority 2

<u>Information</u>	<u>Response</u>
School Name	North Spirit School
Project Cost	\$ 9,500,000. Class "C" estimate
Period of Funding	2009 – \$2,000,000. , 2010 – \$7,500,000.
Policy Criteria	Health and safety requirements, overcrowding
Rational	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1) existing school in need of extensive repairs2) remote community, so flying students to Sioux Lookout is not feasible3) student overcrowding in classrooms

Priority 3

<u>Information</u>	<u>Response</u>
School Name	Attawapiskat School
Project Cost	\$28,500,000. Class "C" estimate
Period of Funding	2009 - \$9,500,000. , 2010 - \$ 18,000,000. , 2011 – \$1,000,000.
Policy Criteria	Health and Safety requirements, overcrowding, curriculum requirements
Rational	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1) existing portables are in need of extensive repairs2) remote community, so flying students to Timmins is not feasible3) student overcrowding in classrooms4) existing elementary school was closed five years ago and condemned

From: Greg Coleman
Sent: 3/12/2008 2:50:58 PM
To: Jessen, Leigh; Maurice, Kelly; Crimp, Tanya; Horne, Faye; Maguire, Bob
CC: Bertrand, Susan
BCC:
Subject: Weekly Issues Management report for the Sr. ADM – Ontario

For your approval and forwarding.

Thanks - Greg

<<< NEW ITEMS / SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS >>>

> Ontario Region school issues / Requests for new schools

Latest Development

On March 10, 2008, MP Charlie Angus raised the issue of a new school for Attawapiskat a second time in the House. MP Angus also raised the need for a new school at Rocky Bay First Nation, noting that the current school contains asbestos, mould and "over stressed beams and a roof that risks collapse from strong winds or heavy snowfall."

On March 11, 2008, the Toronto Star published an editorial quoting MP Angus stating "in December the Conservative government suddenly put on hold a well-developed plan to build a new school in Attawapiskat." The editorial also noted that a number of school projects are being delayed due to a lack of funding. Letters to the editor appeared in the paper on March 12, 2008 indicating that the Government of Canada "doesn't care" about the health and safety of First Nations students. A Letter to the editor from Minister Strahl in response to these editorials is being developed.

School issues in Ontario Region are garnering increasing media attention. It is also expected that school issues in other regions may also begin to be raised. For this reason, Headquarters Communications is hiring a PR firm, Hill and Knowlton, to develop a communications strategy and related products to address this issue.

Media reports indicate that a letter writing campaign to the Government of Canada is under way to highlight the concerns of Attawapiskat residents regarding the need for a new school. A video posted to the YouTube web page is also supporting the campaign. Students at a number of schools in Ontario, including a high school in Toronto, have publicly committed to writing letters to the Minister as well as to students in Attawapiskat to show their support.

Background

On Jan. 24, 2008, MP Angus held a news conference in Attawapiskat First Nation regarding delays in construction of a new school. AFN National Chief Phil Fontaine also visited the community on January 22. MP Angus and the Chief have also written to the Minister regarding this issue. Responses have been based on MO approved media lines.

There has been extensive media coverage of this issue (Toronto Star, Canadian Press/Broadcast News, Timmins Daily Press, CBC Radio and Radio-Canada Sudbury, CICI-TV Sudbury, Q92 and Easy Rock Timmins) referencing "a five year moratorium on school construction" in Ontario, "cancellation of funding" and promises made by three Ministers. MP Angus raised the issue in the House of Commons during Oral Questions on January 31, 2008 and told the Canadian Press he is "launching a national campaign to raise cash for "Third World" (Aboriginal) schools in Canada."

There is no moratorium in any of our capital budget areas. Due to unusual funding pressures, INAC Ontario Region is reviewing its capital budget on an ongoing basis to ensure health and safety concerns are addressed. No projects are cancelled. Given current budgetary constraints, funding for the Attawapiskat school is not currently in the long term capital plan.

INAC provided Attawapiskat with more than \$5.1 million for temporary classroom accommodations and an addition to the existing high school, including three new classrooms and washrooms to allow elementary school students to share the facility. A Health Canada inspection of the high school conducted on Jun. 13, 2007, found no immediate health or safety concerns.

The First Nation is working on a School Capital Planning Study. INAC and the First Nation have agreed upon the projected enrolment figures, which determine the size of the facility. INAC received the final draft of the study on Nov. 29, 2007, and is currently reviewing the document.

A briefing note and Question Period Card are available. Media Lines are being updated.

> First Nations Technical Institute (FNTI) / Funding

Latest Developments

Another meeting of the parties to further discuss these issues was held on March 5, 2008. INAC continues to support

From: Greg Coleman
Sent: 1/23/2008 12:30:55 PM
To: Maguire, Bob
CC: Jessen, Leigh;Crimp, Tanya;Richardson, Deborah
BCC:
Subject: Ontario Issues Management Report for Sr. ADM -- Jan. 23

Below, please find draft e-mail for Sr. ADM. Tanya forwards to the Sr. ADM's office if you approve.

- Greg

<<< NEW ITEMS / SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS >>>

> **Attawapiskat / Request for new elementary school**

On Jan. 15, 2008, media reported that a public meeting was held in Attawapiskat regarding delays in construction of a new school. On Jan. 21, 2008, a Timmins radio outlet made reference to "cancellation of funding" for the new school. In a Timmins Daily Press article on Jan. 22, 2008, Timmins-James Bay MP Charlie Angus accused the government of not making First Nation's education a priority. MP Angus and the Chief have also written to the Minister regarding this issue. Responses are being prepared based on media lines approved this morning.

Two media enquiries to INAC Ontario Region Communications (CP and Timmins Daily Press) enquired about "a five year moratorium on school construction" in Ontario. According to media, AFN National Chief Phil Fontaine will visit the community on Jan. 22, and MP Angus will visit on Jan. 24.

There is no moratorium in any of our capital budget areas, and INAC continues to provide funding for school projects in Ontario First Nation communities. Due to unusual funding pressures, INAC Ontario Region is reviewing its capital budget on an ongoing basis to ensure health and safety concerns are addressed. No projects are cancelled. Given current budgetary constraints, funding for the Attawapiskat school is not currently in the long term capital plan.

INAC provided Attawapiskat with more than \$3 million for temporary classroom accommodations, and more than \$250,000 to modify space in the high school to allow elementary school students to share the facility. A Health Canada inspection of the high school conducted on Jun. 13, 2007, found no immediate health or safety concerns.

The First Nation is working on a School Capital Planning Study. INAC and the First Nation have agreed upon the projected enrolment figures, which determine the size of the facility. INAC received the final draft of the study on Nov. 29, 2007, and is currently reviewing the document.

A briefing note, Question Period Card, and media lines are being updated and approved today.

> **First Nations Technical Institute (FNTI) / Funding**

In an e-mail to the Department on Jan. 8, 2008, the AFN expressed its concerns with the possible closure of the FNTI due to inadequate funding.

On Jan. 22, 2008, the Belleville Intelligencer reported that the FNTI faces a "very real" threat of closure, if the federal and provincial governments don't provide more money. Ontario Region Communications has received two media enquiries (Cornwall Standard Freeholder, Belleville Intelligencer) on this issue and will respond once HQ-approved lines are available.

For 2007-2008, INAC provided \$520,000 through the Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP), and one-time funding of \$978,000 through various funding resources that are not intended to provide ongoing support for post-secondary institutions.

The majority of post-secondary institutions have private sector support in addition to alumni support to offset the costs of post-secondary education. Departmental officials have encouraged FNTI to seek additional financial support outside the federal and provincial governments. INAC provided resources to help FNTI develop business plans that would identify alternative public and private partnerships in order to fulfill its strategic plan and achieve its budgetary requirements for future years.

FNTI continues to set its own tuition fees. INAC has encouraged FNTI to carry out an assessment of tuitions to ensure that the institution can meet its operational program delivery costs, capital and rental charges. By charging tuition fees to levels equivalent to those of other provincial institutions, additional operating funding may be recovered.

INAC officials continue to work within current authorities in an effort to ensure equitable resourcing for approved programs and services. We also continue work with FNTI to identify and develop other resourcing strategies.

From: Greg Coleman
Sent: 2/20/2008 3:48:08 PM
To: Jessen, Leigh;Crimp, Tanya;Maguire, Bob;Richardson, Deborah
CC: Bertrand, Susan
BCC:
Subject: Ontario Issues Management E-mail for Sr. ADM – Feb. 20, 2008

Draft for your consideration. Please note we're very short-staffed so this may not be quite as polished as usual.

- Greg

TWO-WEEK LOOKAHEAD FOR SADM

February 20, 2008

<<< NEW ITEMS / SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS >>>

> Mushkegowuk Tribal Council/Request for payment of \$1.2 million

The Mushkegowuk Tribal Council (MTC) is requesting payment of an additional \$1.2 million in expenses associated with a 60-home renovation project at Kashechewan. MTC advised INAC Ontario Region that it intends to communicate its request to the Minister's Office.

INAC Ontario Region, in collaboration with the Audit and Evaluation Branch, will conduct a preliminary financial performance assessment of the project so that an informed decision may be made regarding the additional \$1.2 million requested by MTC.

It is expected that MTC and/or its member First Nations may bring this issue to the attention of the media. As of Feb. 20, 2008, Ontario Region Communications has not received any media calls on this issue.

Background

In 2005, the MTC, in collaboration with Kashechewan First Nation, established a major renovation plan for 60 homes. The Department agreed to support the project at a cost of approximately \$9.8 million.

Since 2006, MTC provided additional information, and received increases in funding to bring the total expenditures to date on the project to \$11.3 million.

In December 2007, MTC requested payment of an additional \$1.2 million in costs related to the project.

A briefing note and media lines are currently in regional approvals.

> Attawapiskat / Request for new elementary school

Latest Development

Media reports of Feb. 16, 2008, indicate that a letter writing campaign to the Government of Canada is under way to highlight the concerns of Attawapiskat residents regarding the need for a new school.

On February 11, 2008, the Timmins Daily Press (<http://xrl.us/bf5qw>) quoted Ontario Education Minister Kathleen Wynne saying she is "open to discussing the idea (of) "blended" (provincial/federal) jurisdiction" for schools in remote Ontario First Nations. The article did not give details of how this could work. An editorial on February 12 (<http://xrl.us/bf5qy>) also endorsed the idea.

Background

On Jan. 24, 2008, MP Angus held a news conference in Attawapiskat First Nation regarding delays in construction of a new school. A transcript of the news conference quotes MP Angus as saying that three Ministers "have signed off on, a plan that the community would actually build their own school." AFN National Chief Phil Fontaine also visited the community on January 22. MP Angus and the Chief have also written to the Minister regarding this issue. Responses have been based on MO approved media lines.

There has been extensive media coverage of this issue (Canadian Press/Broadcast News, Timmins Daily Press, CBC Radio and Radio-Canada Sudbury, CICI-TV Sudbury, Q92 and Easy Rock Timmins) referencing "a five year moratorium on school construction" in Ontario, "cancellation of funding" and promises made by three Ministers. MP Angus raised the

issue in the House of Commons during Oral Questions on January 31, 2008 and told the Canadian Press he is "launching a national campaign to raise cash for 'Third World' (Aboriginal) schools in Canada."

There is no moratorium in any of our capital budget areas. Due to unusual funding pressures, INAC Ontario Region is reviewing its capital budget on an ongoing basis to ensure health and safety concerns are addressed. No projects are cancelled. Given current budgetary constraints, funding for the Attawapiskat school is not currently in the long term capital plan.

INAC provided Attawapiskat with more than \$5.1 million for temporary classroom accommodations and an addition to the existing high school, including three new classrooms and washrooms to allow elementary school students to share the facility. A Health Canada inspection of the high school conducted on Jun. 13, 2007, found no immediate health or safety concerns.

The First Nation is working on a School Capital Planning Study. INAC and the First Nation have agreed upon the projected enrolment figures, which determine the size of the facility. INAC received the final draft of the study on Nov. 29, 2007, and is currently reviewing the document.

A Briefing Note and Question Period Card are available. Media Lines are being updated.

> First Nations Technical Institute (FNTI) / Funding

Latest Developments

INAC Ontario Region and Minister's Office officials met with representatives of FNTI, MP-Daryl Kramp, and MPP Leona Dombrowsky on Tuesday, Feb. 19, 2008. INAC officials presented a letter to FNTI outlining an offer to fund a strategic business consultant to assist FNTI in developing a business plan. According to INAC officials attending the meeting, FNTI did not view this offer as beneficial, and stated that \$2.5 million in federal funding is required to remain viable.

On Feb. 12, 2008, Ontario Region Communications received a request from a Globe and Mail reporter for two reports regarding Aboriginal post-secondary education/institutions: response to the report and recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs entitled "No Higher Priority, Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education" dated June 12, 2007; and Report on Indigenous Post-Secondary Institutions, dated March 2006, which was commissioned by the AFN/INAC working group on post-secondary education. This request was forwarded to, and has been responded to by, HQ Public Affairs. HQ Communications also advised that a technical briefing is being arranged for the reporter, however Ontario Region Communications has not been advised of when this briefing will take place.

A Letter to the Editor from Minister Strahl appeared in the Toronto Star on Feb. 8 noting that FNTI's "2008-09 business plan already includes a deficit in anticipation of once again calling for more money, while seven other (A)original post-secondary institutions in Ontario have not received emergency funding for programming since 2003."

An editorial appeared in the Toronto Star on Feb. 6, 2008 noting that the Institute will close at the end of this school year "unless federal Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl comes to his senses." Ontario Region Communications was not contacted by the media outlet for comment prior to the publishing of the editorial.

That same day, Member of Parliament, Jean Crowder, stood in the House and asked for an emergency debate on FNTI. The Speaker of the House, Peter Milliken, declined the debate.

Although the Minister announced additional funding for the institute, media continue to report that FNTI will close its doors at the end of March due to a 66 percent decrease in funding from INAC.

Background

An article appeared in the Globe and Mail on Jan. 30, 2008 indicating that the FNTI "has been placed in jeopardy by a federal-provincial dispute over funding." Other regional media outlets have also reported on this issue. In an e-mail to the Department on Jan. 8, 2008, the AFN expressed its concerns with the possible closure of the FNTI due to inadequate funding.

Ontario Region Communications has responded to a number of media enquiries (Globe and Mail, Wawatay News, Cornwall Standard Freeholder, Belleville Pioneer, and Napanee Guide) regarding funding for FNTI, using MO approved media lines.

For 2007-2008, INAC provided over \$1 million through the Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP), and one-time funding of \$979,000 through various funding resources that are not intended to provide ongoing support for post-secondary institutions.

From: Kelly Payn
To: Thurbide, Jennifer
Date: 2/1/2008 11:45:19 AM
Subject: Revised consolidated education lines

Hi Jennifer, we've shortened the lines and, as a result of new info from program, updated some numbers under the school infrastructure project heading. Can you please forward to Ted and Josee and ensure they have the latest?

Thanks.

DRAFT - February 1, 2008

INDIAN AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA - MEDIA LINES
 (not for external distribution - for use by spokespersons only)

ISSUE

Consolidated media lines on Attawapiskat and education.

KEY MESSAGES

- Ensuring that Aboriginal learners enjoy the same opportunities as other Canadians is still very much a goal of the Government of Canada.

MEDIA LINES

Education

- The Government of Canada is committed to improving educational achievement of Aboriginal peoples as a key to improving socio-economic conditions.
- The department currently spends \$1.6 billion annually for First Nations and Inuit education and other related programs including \$1.2 billion on funding for kindergarten to grade 12 and \$303.6 million for post-secondary education.
- Our government is currently reviewing ways to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its education program and policies.

Capital

- While some government programming, like Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's infrastructure program, does allow for flexibility in where money is allocated, be assured any projects with health and safety concerns are addressed first and foremost.
- INAC has reallocated funds from areas such as the Capital Facilities and Maintenance program (infrastructure), as required, in order to cover demographic growth pressures and provincially-set price increases in education and social development.

Attawapiskat

- Due to unusual funding pressures, INAC Ontario Region is reviewing its capital budget on an ongoing basis to ensure health and safety concerns are a priority and addressed. No projects have been cancelled. Also, a Health Canada inspection indicates the current school facilities have no immediate health or safety concerns present.
- A new elementary school in Attawapiskat is not currently in the Region's long term capital plan. The capital plan is prioritized to take into consideration the health and safety of Ontario's First Nations.
- INAC has invested more than \$3 million for temporary classroom accommodations, and more than \$250,000 to modify space in the high school to allow elementary school students to also use the space.
- Officials in the Ontario Region have worked diligently with the First Nation to explore alternative funding options. Unfortunately, none of these options have proven viable so far. We will continue to work with the First Nation.

FNESC

From: Anne Van Dusen
To: Coleman, Greg, Richardson, Deborah
Date: 1/31/2008 4:30:02 PM
Subject: Re: Fwd: QP - Attawapiskat / Angus -- January 31, 2008

Thanks Deborah. Did you see the lines since they were updated to reflect messaging in the Minister's statement yesterday? They may do the trick...

Anne.

-----Original Message-----

From: Deborah Richardson
To: Van Dusen, Anne <VanDusenA@ainc-inac.gc.ca>
Coleman, Greg <ColemanG@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Creation Date: 1/31 3:53 pm
Subject: Re: Fwd: QP - Attawapiskat / Angus -- January 31, 2008

Not quite accurate...we need more lines that clarify a better.

-----Original Message-----

From: Greg Coleman
To: Katherine Knott <KnottK@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Leigh Jessen <JessenL@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Joseph Young <YoungJ@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Deborah Richardson <RichardsonD@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
CC: Susan Bertrand <BertrandSE@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Creation Date: 1/31 3:39 pm
Subject: Fwd: QP - Attawapiskat / Angus -- January 31, 2008

On the chance you haven't yet seen this...

>>> HQ Inform 01/31/08 3:34 PM >>>

>> The speaker: The Honourable member for Timmins James Bay

>> Charlie Angus (ndp): Thank you Mr. Speaker. Education is a universal human right unless of course you live on a First Nation territory under this government. The families of Attawapiskat are reeling from the fact that the school that they fought for eight years that was supposed to begin this spring has been canceled. Now we've had three Indian Affairs Ministers to support this project but this Minister has told the community that First Nations schools are no longer a priority for his government. So my question is, why should the children of Attawapiskat have to put up with his fundamental disinterest in their health and well being?

>> The speaker: The Honourable Minister of...

>> Hon. Chuck Strahl: Mr. Speaker of course I've never said any such thing. Mr. Speaker education is one of the keys for First Nations communities, as it is for all Canadians, as is economic development opportunities. The school in question on that particular reserve Mr. Speaker, we've invested over \$3 million into a school system there. We've also... another \$250,000 to help with some renovations that they wanted to have done. Mr. Speaker, there are no health concerns in that particular school. And, of course, we'd all like to have more and newer schools but Mr. Speaker we continue to invest in schools across the country as a priority for this government.

>> The speaker: The Honourable member for Timmins James Bay

>> Charlie Angus (ndp): You know why I'm concerned? I've been in that school Mr. Speaker, those portables are a fire trap. Health concerns, is that his criteria for education? You know we're not talking

about buying holding pens for cattle. We're talking about the most fundamental right that every children in this country should enjoy, the right to go to a good school that gives them hope. I'll ask him a simple question: Would he put up with such a dismissive attitude from any school board official that his children would be under? Because why should the children of the James Bay coast have to put up with his dismissive attitude?

>> The speaker: The Honourable Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development

>> Hon. Chuck Strahl: Mr. Speaker they have to put up with that sanctimonious attitude because that member knows full well, we've had meetings on this, there are requests from school boards or schools from across the country. We have extensive investments, record investments in education across this country. It's a priority for this government. Mr. Speaker, there are no health concerns in that school, he should not portray it else wise. Mr. Speaker we continue to work with First Nations across the country, education is key to their success, we want to make it a priority which we are doing right now. And we'll continue to invest in First Nations education from coast to coast.

Jim Hurcomb

To access Newsdesk directly, visit <http://newsdesk>.

Pour l'accès direct à Infomedia, veuillez visiter <http://infomedia>

From: Anne Van Dusen
To: Bertrand, Susan; Coleman, Greg
Date: 2/22/2008 4:04:58 PM
Subject: Re: Fwd: QRT Notes-Communications, Friday, February 22, 2008

Thanks Susan. I think you are right. Let's revisit on Monday. I will discuss with D. Laurson first thing in the morning. MO focus may have changed by then...

s.19(1)

Take care and give my best to Tony.
red wine be his preferred choice?

If we were to send him something would

Anne Van Dusen
Communications Manager, SEPRO
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
(819)994-7285

>>> Susan Bertrand 02/22/08 3:49 PM >>>
Anne,

We've been digging into this for weeks now and there is no straightforward, simple answer and it's not a good story.

Here's what we've come up with so far and there's still holes to fill. It might be useful for us to have another telecon to discuss what our messages might be as there are details that I could better explain in that forum.

Chronology

- In accordance with an agreement, signed in December 1995 to remediate soil contaminated by a fuel spill in the winter of 1979, INAC Ontario Region provided \$677,330 to Attawapiskat for clean-up of the site.
- The First Nation advised INAC Ontario Region, by way of a completion report, that the clean-up, which consisted of remediation in the areas near the school and teacherages, was finalized in November 1997.
- On May 11, 2000, the Attawapiskat First Nation Education Authority, with the support of a Band Council Resolution, closed the school due to health and safety concerns.
- Following the closure of the school, four options were discussed to address the need for temporary school facilities, as well further remediation of the school site.
- In August 2000, INAC Ontario Region agreed to provide funding for temporary school facilities consisting of 7-duplex portable classrooms and 2-4 plex buildings for administration and resource space. Additionally, it was agreed that a thorough review of the contamination would be conducted in order to determine the extent of the problem.
- On August 31, 2001, INAC Ontario Region received a Statement of Claim from Attawapiskat First Nation seeking \$90.2 million in compensation for the impact of the 1979 fuel spill. As a result of the litigation, efforts to continue the remediation process halted.
- Discussions regarding an out of court settlement with the First Nation were held in late 2003 and throughout 2004. However, the issue still remains before the courts.
- In January 2005, at a meeting held in the community, INAC Ontario Region worked with the First Nation to prepare the terms of reference for a project manager to begin the process required to build a new school.
- In 2005-2006, INAC provided the First Nation approximately \$232,900 to assess all the studies to date in order to develop a unified assessment of contamination in the community, and the best approach to deal with it. The final draft of that consolidated study was provided to INAC in July 2007.
- The First Nation is in the process of hiring a project manager to manage the remediation of all community sites. The project manager will assist the First Nation in developing a Preliminary Project Approval (PPA) document as the next phase of remediating all contaminated sites in Attawapiskat.
- Effective Project Approvals (EPA) is expected to be granted early in 2008, with work scheduled to

From: Anne Van Dusen
To: Caines, Jill
Date: 3/11/2008 10:57:26 AM
Subject: Fwd: CBC Newsworld Minister Strahl

FYI for your lines...

Anne Van Dusen
Communications Manager, SEPRO
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
(819)994-7285

>>> Anne Van Dusen 03/10/08 10:14 AM >>>
FYI, I think we have successfully moved away from focussing on the HC health and safety inspection message. Hope this helps.

Anne.

Anne Van Dusen
Communications Manager, SEPRO
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
(819)994-7285

>>> HQ Inform 03/09/08 5:35 PM >>>
CBC NEWSWORLD 16: 10

>>Andrew: People on a reserve in northern Ontario are hoping they can get a new school, and after years of negotiating with Ottawa they're pleading their case on Youtube. Students in Attawapiskat haven't had a school building for nearly 30 years, since a diesel fuel spill contaminated it, and for eight years they've been in portable classrooms. The Attawapiskat reserve is in the riding of NDP MP Charlie Angus. We spoke with him earlier in the day, and he called on the Indian Affairs Minister to provide funding to build the new school. The Minister of Indian Affairs Chuck Strahl joins us from Ottawa. Minister Strahl, it's been almost 30 years since the school was contaminated by an oil spill, why can't this government provide the community with a school?

>>Minister Strahl: Well, ok, it's important first that listeners know that, of course, the kids aren't in that school that was polluted 29 years ago. About eight years ago the government of the day built new facilities there, and since that time spent about \$5 million invested in those facilities, including some modifications to the adjoining high school so that the kids can use some of those facilities as well. So they're not in a polluted environment. And that's important because, of course, health and safety comes first. But, anyway, we prioritize needs for kids across the country, starting with health and safety needs, and at times, as is the case in the Ontario region, you know, we just have to make that a priority. And that's why, for example, I was at the opening of a new school in Pikangikum, the same region, that we built this last fall. It's a \$13 million investment because the old school burnt down and sometimes you have to make those choices.

>>Andrew: But these kids, from what I understand, they're in makeshift facilities, they are in portables and they're not in a permanent school. They're getting taught in portables?

>>Minister Strahl: As are the kids in Pikangikum. That's \$13 million to build a temporary school. The school that they have designed in Attawapiskat is probably a \$30 million school and we don't have the budget for that. But, again, the school that's there, the temporarily facilities that are there are eight years old. Obviously, the kids and the local residents want a new school, a complete school, as do I, but at any given time you have to prioritize based on a bunch of factors, starting with health and safety. And we have about 25 major school construction projects planned that were short this year alone in Canada, and we have about 12 of them to be built this year, but Attawapiskat, because the facilities are only 8 years old, is

From: Bob Maguire
To: Deborah Richardson, Leigh Jessen, Tony Prudori
Date: Tuesday, February 26, 2008 7:28:57 AM
Subject: Re: Fwd: MEDIA REPORT - Ontario Region

Leigh:
Here are my thoughts:

I suggest no timelines are implied though with normal maintenance portables can provide 10-20 years of reasonable and safe use and are in use widely by schools to accomodate children routinely.

As to INAC and health and safety we rely on Health Canada, HRSDC, Environment Canada, CMHC, and professional building inspectors or engineering consultants retained by First Nations to advise on structural, safety, fire and building compliance, and health issues. INAC is principally a funding organization supporting First Nations delivery of programs and services eligible for INAC funding and delivery at the community level

INAC has no inspectors we do however have professional engineers who can review technical reports submitted by First Nations and other federal departments related to public works and infrastructure.

Robert (Bob) Maguire
416-973-8111

-----Original Message-----

From: Tony Prudori
To: Leigh Jessen <JessenL@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Bob Maguire <MaguireB@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Deborah Richardson <RichardsonD@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
CC: Katherine Knott <KnottK@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Ken Atkins <AtkinsK@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Peggy Nolan <NolanP@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Richard Earl <EarlR@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Gus Foresto <ForestoG@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Brian Holm <HolmB@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Art Mauro <MauroA@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Joseph Young <YoungJ@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Creation Date: 2/26 4:51 pm
Subject: Fwd: MEDIA REPORT - Ontario Region

FYI, here are the questions being asked, and my proposed responses (to be run through urgent approvals tomorrow):

1) When \$ was invested in temporary accommodations (portables), was any timeline attached to the investment?

No specific timeline is typically associated with this form of infrastructure. First Nations receive annualized funding to allow for the ongoing operation and maintenance of such facilities.

2) How does INAC assess the health and safety of students in such situations? Are INAC inspectors visiting the facilities on a regular basis? How can a reporter receive copies of inspection documentation?

Health Canada conducts inspections on such facilities at the request of any First Nation. Any

From: Susan Bertrand
Sent: 2/26/2008 5:06:47 PM
To: PublicAffairs Public Affairs Team
CC:
BCC:
Subject: Media Relations Report - Ontario Region

Sherry Huff (CBCS-FM Sudbury (705) 688-3229) I returned Ms. Huff's call of yesterday requesting more information on the Attawapiskat school. Specifically, in response to Ms. Huff's question regarding how INAC has determined the temporary school facilities at Attawapiskat are safe, I noted that Health Canada conducts inspections of the school and would be in a better position to address how inspections are conducted and what criteria is used to determine the safety of such facilities. Ms. Huff is also seeking inspection reports which I noted Health Canada would be able to advise if those were available. Ms. Huff then pressed that INAC would have copies of those reports and in a show of good faith should provide them. I noted that I would follow-up on her request. Ms. Huff also wants to know if an end date was provided for the temporary facilities and how long they are expected to remain in place. Will require further follow-up.

Susan E. Bertrand
A/Manager Communications Operations and Media Relations
Executive Services and Communications
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
100 Anemki Drive - Suite 101
Thunder Bay, Ontario P7J 1A5
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4965-113

TRANSCRIPTION/TRANSCRIPTION

NEWS CONFERENCE/CONFÉRENCE DE PRESSE

Transcription prepared by Media Q Inc. exclusively for INAC

Transcription préparée par Media Q Inc. exclusivement pour AINC

DATE/DATE: January 24, 2008 2:00 p.m.

LOCATION/ENDROIT: ATTAWAPISKAT FIRST NATION, ON

PRINCIPAL(S)/PRINCIPAUX: Charlie Angus, NDP MP
Chief Theresa Hall, Attawapiskat First Nation
Angus Toulouse, Chiefs of Ontario
Steve Hookimaw, Education Authority, Attawapiskat
Stan Louttit, Grand Chief, Mushkegowuk
Angus Toulouse, Chiefs of Ontario
Stella Wesley, Principal, JR Nakooge School
Ron Day, Principal, High School

SUBJECT/SUJET: NDP MP Charlie Angus will hold a news conference to respond to recent comments made by INAC Minister Chuck Strahl that the government won't be building any new schools over the next 5 years. Mr. Angus will be joined by local officials, including Chief Theresa Hall and Angus Toulouse of the Chiefs of Ontario.

Chief Theresa Hall: The Chairman of the Education (inaudible), that is the best (inaudible) and also the R&T that is with us, and also the educators in our community. At the time of the letter that we received on December 18th, we were appalled to find that we were, the community was not, the elementary school was not going to be a goal for our community. And I feel all along that Education Authority, along with our support, that they were led to believe that they were going to get a, a brand new school and, and we feel we have been misled by this, by the letter that we received from the federal government.

And I believe it's a national disgrace that this happened to us. You know, we, we, we expect our children to be educated in the standard, (inaudible) standards that are equivalent to anyone that lives outside of our community. Thank you.

Unidentified Male: That was Chief Theresa Hall, Steve Hookimaw from the Education Authority of Attawapiskat.

Steve Hookimaw: Good afternoon. My name is Steve Hookimaw. I'm the Chairman of Education Authority. I've been involved with the Education Authority back in 1990, ever since the First Nation took over the, the (inaudible) of education from, from Indian Affairs. And during, during, during the operation of our schools and, and, and back in 1985, there have been six, six studies were completed during the period from 1985 to 1999 on (inaudible) contamination of, of the fuel spill of, of other leaks from oil distributing estimate about 25,000 to 30,000 gallons of fuel. And back in the year 2000, it was, (inaudible) and shut down due to contamination for health, health and safety issues.

And ever since that, we, we've been lobbying to get, to get the new school. And we, we've been promised after promise with previous Ministers who, who support and agreed to accept the alternative to, to a capital approach with, to, to a tuition agreement. But however, just before Christmas, through our lobbyists, I find out that it appears to have in Ottawa and Toronto that they are, they decided not to build new schools within First Nation communities. And I was very, very disappointed. And after the amount of dollars that we spent to lobbying, to nego, to build a new school. And, and everything, all the letters that we, that we received from (inaudible) Ministers along with the former RDC's that they were supporting the tuition agreement and everything that's been recommended.

And like I said, I'm very disappointed to hear just before, a week before Christmas that they decided not to build, build new schools within the First Nation communities. But bear in mind, our children are not different with the other societies. They are (inaudible) and also deserve to have their, their (inaudible) facility where we can house them. Thank you for that.

Grand Chief Stan Louttit: Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. My name is Stan Louttit, I'm the Grand Chief of the Mushkegowuk, the, the regional tribal council of James, James Bay.

As the Chief and the Chair of the Education Authority indicated, the community feels let down, the community feels lied to, the community feels frustrated. As the Chair said, three prior Ministers, Andy Scott, before Andy Scott, Robert Nault, Andy Scott and Jim Prentice all agreed to, to providing and working with the community in terms of a new school and gave their thumbs up to the community to have a new school. Once it got down to the bureaucracy through the system of the government, this is where the, the problem arose, that the Regional Director General stating that they don't have the, the dollars to proceed with this, that they don't have the, the dollars to, to support any, any new schools in the province.

And we find that very, very appalling for, for one basic reason. Why should First Nation students, why should First Nation pupils in Ontario and Canada expect anything less than what's, than what's provided in Timmins, North Bay, Sudbury and Toronto? Why should we have to put up with it, but we're putting up with it day in and day out. Would the City of Timmins, would the City of Sudbury put up with this? If there was a problem, I can bet you any money that within two or three days, the government would be there with, with their wallets open saying okay, let's start working on this. But we've been doing this now for years and years.

And an education is a basic right for, for any Ontario resident, for any Canadian, any Canadian citizen. And as well internationally. This is an international right that we're talking about. And we're not going to stop talking about this, we're not going to stop talking about it locally, nationally, internationally. It contravenes the very basic right of human beings to have an education, a quality education. And we cannot, and we're appalled that the government is sitting back and saying that we're not going to be doing

this anymore, that we cannot help you because of, because of dollars or whatever their excuse is. Given the fact that Ministers approved it, approved the school prior to this, and now, and now they're turning, they're turning their back on us. That's why we feel that we've been lied to. Thank you.

Charlie Angus: Thank you. It's Charlie Angus, member of Parliament for Timmins-James Bay. We have been meeting here in the community to discuss an action plan. It must be said that there is a moment when you have a community that has dealt with years of indifference and systemic contempt has been shown by Indian Affairs, that a community draws a line in the sand and says enough. That line has been drawn here in Attawapiskat.

Every study that has been asked of this community has been delivered. Every possible stalling tactic by the government has been tried. And yet, the community, through its patience, its perseverance and its credibility has come forward with a plan that three Ministers have signed off on, a plan that the community would actually build their own school. The decision that's being made now by Indian Affairs is not just about Attawapiskat. It's about every First Nation community in this country where this government under Chuck Strahl, have made it clear that education is not a priority for this government.

And our response to, in Attawapiskat is that enough is enough. We will not wait till 2016 to have a school that should have been built eight years ago. As the Grand Chief said, education is a fundamental human right. It's not just a right that's reserved for non-Native students. We're now declaring that the days when Indian Affairs could have a substandard educational apartheid for First Nations students has to end. We will not accept the position of Chuck Strahl that he simply doesn't find money available for schools because it's under their fiduciary obligation to fund education and these students have the same right to proper schools as any other student in this country, or indeed anywhere in the world.

So our response today is that we will begin a national campaign. We will be seeking the help of students across Canada. Because any student, any family, Native or non-Native understands the need for a good school with adequate resources. We're starting letter writing campaigns, we're starting to reach out to other schools now. We feel that this is the first step in a long term fight that we understand will take time, but the community simply cannot accept a Minister who at the 11th hour rips up a signed agreement where the finances are in place and says wait till 2016 for your school. That simply is not on.

Angus Toulouse, do you want to give us the, the regional and national perspective?

Chief Angus Toulouse: Sure. Thank you. Angus Toulouse, Ontario Regional Chief. I'm going to start off by saying it is appalling and it is a shame that not only for the community of Attawapiskat but there are many communities throughout Ontario that are in the same situation. But today, we're talking about Attawapiskat. But I just

needed to say that because Attawapiskat isn't the only community that's waiting, but this is a prime example of a community that has been assured time and time and time again, at least three Ministers, that they are going to get the facility that students require in a safe and healthy way.

And we talked about certainly the need and over the past couple of weeks, in the media, they're talking about Toronto schools, the health and safety of, of those students in those schools. And we're talking about health and safety. It may not be the kind of violence that's experienced in Toronto schools, but we're still talking about having our students be educated in a healthy and safe environment. And having them in schools for eight years and for another eight years is not the answer. So I believe that when the government says that we need to do renewals, that they are consulting the kind of data that we've supplied through the communities, that communities have supplied to the department to indicate what those feasibility studies indicate the costs are, what it's going to take to address the problem.

Communities have done all this work. The Department of Indian Affairs has the data. They need to now ensure that those surpluses that we're very aware of, those billions of dollars get recommitted to where the need is. And I think we have demonstrated that need. Government has identified that the need is real and that they need to address the issue and rectify the problem, which is to build these facilities as they have promised to do so to the students, to the children and to the communities and in this particular case, to the community of Attawapiskat, who's been promised this time and time again.

Now's the time to act. Now's the time to ensure that when we say the population that needs to be invested in, First Nation population because we have a huge growth, we have the, the fit in relation to some of the skilled labour that this country is going to require, but we need to educate our young people first. And, and the kind of education that we're providing and the facilities that are there aren't going to do it. In order for us to be economically involved, to ensure that our students get the education and the skills so that they can get that meaningful employment that will, will demonstrate their contribution to this economy that we call Canada.

Unidentified Male: Thank you.

We will open it up to questions now. And as I said, we also have our principals Ron Day and Stella Wesley from the grade school if anyone has any particular questions about what's happening with the students and the education that is being provided here in Attawapiskat.

Question: I've got a question Charlie. It's Gerry from Moose FM. And I was wondering if, I don't know who would field this, if you talk about, I believe it was mentioned previously, it was \$30 million I believe was the plan for a 5,000 square foot school. Can someone discuss the financing of that? How much money was supposed to come from the government or what was the breakdown of, of the

funding for this project?

Charlie Angus: Well the irony for this project was that the community didn't want Indian Affairs dollars because Indian Affairs continually under funds schools. What we have looked at and the Education Authority can speak to that was that actually we had a bank loan in place. The only thing we needed from the federal government was a tuition agreement where we could take it to the bank and then the community could start to build the school. So with the federal government squeezing money out of infrastructure dollars, out of capital dollars, out of First Nations projects, for them to target Attawapiskat doesn't make sense because this community has already secured its own financing with its own track record, and Steve Hookimaw has been involved in these negotiations.

Steve Hookimaw: Yes remember, we were, we were trying, we were doing the same approach, the one we did with our, to build our local high school here (inaudible) by approaching two alternatives to capital, capital approach, which means we have a tuition agreement to have in place with, with Indian Affairs. And by doing that, we, by doing that, that's where we were looking to be off the loan to build for \$30 million for the, for the new school. We were not asking for extra dollars to the federal government or, or not even back going to Treasury Board. All we wanted to do it's with the same routine that we did with the local high school here in (inaudible).

Question: If three, if three prior Ministers had all agreed to work with the community on this school, is there any formal appeal process from a political standpoint where you can go back and say hey, this has been promised. You can't just drop this off the map?

Grand Chief Stan Louttit: I think that's very, very critical. This is Grand Chief Stan Louttit speaking. It's very critical that it's noted that the, that the lead key Ministers, the lead Ministers on behalf of the government gave their thumbs up to, to this, to this approach. And yes, we are, we feel very, very, very angry about that because we're left with no alternative but to do what we're doing today, and that is lobbying and campaigning nationally to, to, to have the government deal with us fairly. What's happening is basically, basically this. The, the bureaucrats are overriding the decisions of, of the top Minister. And to me, that's very, very troublesome. How often does that happen across the country that people aren't even, aren't even aware of?

Question: So what, so what I'm asking you is there a formal appeal process to, to appeal this sort of thing?

Grand Chief Stan Louttit: I'm not aware of any government official, governmental appeal process, but I'm, I can tell you now that we're going to be going ahead and meeting with, with government and others to, to talk about the travesty that's happening here.

Question: I'd like to ask a question, sorry. This is Melissa

Duggan calling from Q92 and Easy Rock News. I guess this is directed towards the, the principles, the people from the school. If you can just give me kind of the numbers, how many students go there and also just describe the situation of the portables?

Stella Wesley: My name is Stella Wesley. I'm the principal of the school and we have approximately 400 students that come to the portables. And

Question: I'm sorry, I'm sorry to interrupt you. If you could just start over again, there was a bit of feedback there at the beginning.

Stella Wesley: Okay I'm sorry. Alright. My name is Stella Wesley and I am the principal of JR Nakooje School. And to answer your question, we have approximately 400 students that come to the portables and they're from JK to Grade 8. And the, the conditions that the portables are in, apparently, they were supposed to be a 10-year life span. I doubt very much they will make it to that, to that number because as a lot of people have seen already, our portables are peeling, they're cracking on the walls, the doors are shifting, which means that it's bringing a, it's a definite health hazard for the people that are in there, students and staff because if you're there in minus 40 degree weather, you can definitely feel the, the draft coming in.

Question: I have a question. Just a follow-up on that. Dave Ducharme from CBC Radio in Sudbury. I spoke to a representative from INAC today that said Health Canada actually did an inspection up there and deemed that the temporary facilities in fact did not pose a health and/or safety risk. Can anybody there tell me when that inspection as done? It sounds like from the state of the portables, that the inspection may have been done under more ideal weather circumstances, if you will. I'm not sure who can field that, but that's (inaudible - technical difficulties).

Unidentified Male: Steve Hookimaw.

Question: Yes.

Steve Hookimaw: Well, I don't, I don't recall when was, when was the last time that they did inspect our portables. And I'm not, I'm now know when our, when, when that, when they took that inspection. But however, I do remember one time when Alexandra Chow came in to do an inspection, but she was only doing an inspection with, the last time while she was here to do inspecting on, on the (inaudible) of our arena. But she didn't do any, she didn't do any, with the schools.

Charlie Angus: Yeah, Charlie Angus here. We, I guess we've discussed the response from INAC around the table. Number one is we haven't seen any real clear inspection carried out in these schools. And the other response is what an absolutely irrelevant and meaningless excuse to come up and say well, we're not building your school because we've looked at the portables and the kids aren't going to die in them. That seems to be the position of Indian Affairs. They're telling us well the kids aren't going to get sick in the portables so it's good enough for them. That's not

the role of any education authority. The role of an education authority is to ensure that there's proper schools and the role of the government is to ensure that those schools are funded.

So we're actually rather shocked that that's the best answer Indian Affairs can come up with at this time is to say well, we can just leave the portables there because as long as nobody's sick or dying, well why not? No other school, no other community would accept that standard and we're certainly not going to accept that standard here in Attawapiskat.

Question: Well this is Lynn from CTV. I also spoke with someone from INAC, Anthony Prud'homme earlier today. He told me the exact same thing he told Dave Ducharme and he also said that INAC takes direction from the community as to where they should, you know, what they should prioritize in terms of what should, should be fixed first and it's also based on health and safety risks. So he was pointing to the fact that since that wasn't a life and death situation, the school wasn't going to get funding. And I'm just wondering okay, if the school isn't the life and death situation, is there some other life and death situation or very dangerous facilities that INAC is seemingly concentrating on if it's not the school?

Charlie Angus: Well, to put in perspective, it's Charlie Angus here, last year, INAC under spent \$109 million in its capital budget. It just didn't bother to spend that.

Question: You mean across Canada?

Charlie Angus: Yes. So think of the schools that would have been built with that money. And again, anybody in Indian Affairs who believes the role of, of building schools is simply whether it's a life or death situation obviously shouldn't be in that job. End of story. Are you telling us that we can till 2016 to build a school? Why? Because it'll be a life and death situation at that point? It's an absurd argument. The role of the government is to work out adequate funding agreements to build proper schools. And we have a funding agreement in place. Did they rip up the funding agreement because they said kids aren't going to get sick and die?

What they're telling us out of Indian Affairs is a very meaningless and detracting argument from the issue at hand. The issue at hand is why did Chuck Strahl walk away from a signed agreement at the 11th hour?

Unidentified Male: And then, just to add on on enrollment projections that indicate that five years, five years from now, there are elementary schools, elementary school (inaudible) population will reach approximately 646. And now, (inaudible) they'll be able, capable enough to accommodate 646 students?

Stella Wesley: This is Stella Wesley. I just want to go back to (inaudible - technical difficulties) talking about in respect to, I, I'm not a health

professional by a long shot, but I do, I am involved with the health profession by sitting on the Board in Attawapiskat. What I wanted to say is that I think it is mindless and also very ignorant that somebody is able to make a statement that says that, that the kids are not in any immediate health hazard the way things are like here. Probably, maybe they think that's much more (inaudible) from, from a, from their point of view. But when you really look at it, the portables are not connected to each. We're already isolated in an already isolated generation.

And when you, there's no morale. It's very low because we don't see each other as it is because we have to walk so many, so many feet to, to see each other. And when (inaudible) like students go to the gym, they have to walk several hundred feet to go there. And then when they come out and they play, and then they come out all sweaty in minus 40 weather, that's just not good. I believe that's an immediate health hazard myself. And in terms of you know, because of the emotional turmoils up there, that brings about health hazards. I believe that Health Canada, if they say, or INAC or whoever they call, they got that from to really evaluate what they base their decisions on. Thank you.

Question: Question for Chief Hall. This is Alan Pedwell calling from CJKL News. Just wondering you told the Canadian Press, I guess, that it depends on how you define health risks in terms of the portables. What do you feel is, is the health risk in general in the portables?

Chief Theresa Hall: When you see the, I believe everyone of you who's out there listening to us should actually make that (inaudible) trip to Attawapiskat and see for yourself the condition of those portables. They're drafty and anyone can get sick (inaudible) drafty. No one should have to be, be living or being taught in that situation. If, if that's, if that's not a health risk, I don't know what is.

Question: Dave Ducharme from CBC in Sudbury again, with a question again open to whoever would like to answer it. Referring back to my conversation with Susan Bertrand from, from the regional office, INAC's regional office today. Susan said there's actually no moratorium on the construction of the school and other schools, meaning when I mentioned to her the, the, the mention of five years, that perhaps in five years, this will be reexamined, she said there's no moratorium meaning there is no time limit on it. She said the, that the issue is their capital budget and reassessing from their perspective. Anybody's comments on that because I, when you hear conflicting things about dates that are put out there, and she says that there's no time line and no moratorium, it could lead to some confusion. I was hoping to have that cleared up.

Unidentified Male: Well certainly you'll, you'll get confusion when you hear weasel words and that's what you're getting from Indian Affairs. And unfortunately, time and time again with Indian Affairs, we get weasel words from their communications people. I'm not saying that disrespectfully, but when they tell our negotiators that you'll wait five years for a school, they're pretty clear. If there was no

moratorium, Attawapiskat's school would be going ahead. We have an agreement on paper in September saying the school's going ahead. In December, we get verbal communication from their team that the school is not happening and it's not happening for five years. So if, if this, if Indian Affairs says we're wrong, then come back to the negotiating table and get this school built.

Question: Gerry (inaudible) from the Moose again. Just wondering there's been a lot of talk about plans for the school. If this incident didn't occur, would we be putting a shovel in the ground tomorrow? If not, when?

Unidentified Male: Steve, what was the plan for the school?

Steve Hookimaw: The plan for the school, it's, it's this winter, it was to mobilize the materials and the ground. The ground's supposed to be (inaudible) in the spring. (Inaudible) on a new, on the (inaudible) where the new subdivision is and the ground, so the (inaudible) would have been happening, taking place in May and the construction's supposed to take at least two years.

Question: So we're looking at full construction by 2010?

Steve Hookimaw: Well apparently at this time, like, like, like what we're saying here is we've been waiting after and after (inaudible) and they do all their sorts of power to stop us to build that new school.

Question: I have a question for either Chief Hall or principal Wesley. Can you give us a sense of how the children understand this problem?

Stella Wesley: We had a chance to, Stella Wesley, principal, we had a chance to speak to a few students recently as well in regards to how they feel. If I may quote some of them, I know the, of course they feel disappointed. Actually one of the analogies is like it's something that goes like when you give candy to a baby, and you take, or a child and you take it away, how do they feel? And that was the analogy that was used. The (inaudible) conversation, they, they know, they're asking what does the school look like? What does it look like? Obviously, some of the kids will go through portables during their elementary life and not knowing what a real school, a building looks like.

Question: Do some of them know what a real school looks like? Have some of them seen, like, the school in Fort Alberni or schools, you know, that aren't on the James Bay coast so that they know what they're missing?

Stella Wesley: They do, they would know how, what they were missing by, by seeing pictures of other communities, but not necessarily seen them personally.

Charlie Angus: Lynn, we had an interesting anecdote as we were

walking to this meeting. I met one of the youth workers in the community. And he asked me if we were here to speak about the school and he said to me he had such a hard time with the young students with truancy and he said to one of the students why don't you come to school? And the child said to him, well we don't have a real school so why should I go? We certainly feel here that there's a, a psychological impact every time the rug gets pulled out from this community because the children get a sense well, are they not worthy to have a proper school?

And, and if that's what the kids are saying in the school yard, that is certainly damaging to the, to the ability of a community to build itself because we've already lost a generation that has not had a proper school. And what Chuck Strahl is telling us, well you'll wait another generation. And to get back to the simplicity of the, the argument, there's no other community in this country other than Native communities who would ever have to face this situation. And we have to ask why is that. And that's the question that we'll be asking in our campaign as we start to organize in schools across Canada. If you would not accept this standard, why should the children of Attawapiskat or any other First Nation accept that standard?

Question: I tried to get Tony Prudon, maybe I was asking the wrong person, but I tried to get him to tell me if the capital budget had been shrunk or increased or stayed the same under Stephen Harper. And he just wouldn't answer the question. He said that, you know, they're under budget pressures from high steel costs and labour shortages. But he wouldn't tell me if there were budget pressures relating to the size of the budget in terms of is it bigger or smaller. So I'm just wondering if you have a source on that.

Charlie Angus: Yes Lynn, we've looked at the, the Estimates for the federal government. As I said, last year \$109 million under spent and returned to Treasury Board to help fund tax cuts. That's money that could have built homes, could have built medical clinics, could have built schools all across First Nation territory. Between now and 2009, nearly \$300 million will be taken out of the capital infrastructure dollars for INAC. So certainly, this government is looking to make its tax cuts on the weakest, most vulnerable communities in this country.

If you look at government spending priorities, the, what they've told the community is that they are concentrating on the water and sewage projects, meaning schools, well we simply won't build them. That was, that's what they verbally told the community and their negotiators.

Question: Hi. George (inaudible) with (inaudible) Ontario Radio.

Charlie Angus: Yes?

Question: I got a question for the Attawapiskat school members. Can you just give us a brief update about the conditions of the school in Attawapiskat? And also, can you also add, recently National Chief Fontaine was there and did

children protest to the new school? And what was National Chief's response to this situation?

Stella Wesley: Hi, it's Stella Wesley again. The condition of the school, as I said, is the portables are, are, I feel, I'm not an architect but by looking at them, I don't think they'll make through their expected life span of 10 years. And that the portables are shifting. The, the doors are not shutting properly. The fire doors are causing an extremely, extremely hazard to the students in terms of fire safety. And, and of course, the, they're cracking. You can see the outside from the inside. So I mean, when yes, Phil Fontaine was here yesterday, two days ago rather. The students did a small rally and sort of for the National Chief. He, verbally he said to the students that he would in all his power help out as much as he can and that he would not ever send his children there, or rather his grandchildren to something like this, quote, unquote.

Unidentified Male: Any other questions?

Question: Can you just tell me what the fire hazard is?

Stella Wesley: The fire hazard I'm speaking about is that the doors are jamming because of shifting. And sometimes, it's very hard for them to, to open right away. So we have to get our maintenance guy to come in and take a look at them and try some ways to, to make, have them easily accessible in and out.

Unidentified Male: Well (inaudible) on those (inaudible), it seems a bit high cost to maintain because your (inaudible) all different scenarios. Like especially in cold winter months where that, that (inaudible) and frost penetrate to underground which means really affecting all those shifting. So which means that they would create fire hazards, which means that the doors could all jam, could even be in and out so that's why those portables are really high cost to maintain. Like when we used to have that, that old (inaudible). And it's really causing us one hell of a big amount of money to operate with the portables as well.

Chief Theresa Hall: Yeah, this is Theresa Hall. (Inaudible) also overcrowding is a fire hazard issue. When you try to have a fire exit and when you have, when the students, there are so many students in the portable schools, can you imagine trying to get 21 junior K students or senior K students to evacuate one room, school building, you know. That's overcrowded, that has all the class rooms, the desks so close that you can't move (inaudible).

Ron Day: This is Ron Day from the high school. If you can take a picture and you have two class rooms right and left, you have 21 students from the right, 21 students from the left, so 42 coming out of a portable during a fire drill. And you have one door coming out. If you look inside the class rooms, they're so narrow that you have students with desks side by side. They do not have individual space. They get on each other. The decibel, the noise, it's just loud in these rooms. And it's

because there is not enough personal space for students.

Question: There really's only one door? There's not two doors?

Ron Day: There's one door that you can use. The other one, if you can get to it is around back. But as you know, we're creatures of habit and we all go out the same door we come in.

Question: Okay.

Question: Alan from CJKL, question for the principal of the school. What's the situation right now with the contaminated school itself and the, the leaky oil, I guess, that's underground there. Is that still posing a risk to the, to the students?

Stella Wesley: I think it, it's still there. What, it's still there, it hasn't been cleaned up yet. And I'm trying to get our students to stay away from it, but of course we're only next door to the original high, to the original building of (inaudible) school. As far as I think, what they're doing is the Chairman might be able to tell you more than I can.

Steve Hookimaw: Well apparently, this (inaudible) and with the oil leak inside the (inaudible) in winter of 1979. That's when the time, that's when Indian Affairs was still upgrading our schools here in Attawapiskat. And they had estimates, like I said before, they had estimate that 25,000 to 30,000 gallons of fuel oil was spilled. And one of the largest in northern Ontario. And they, and there have been six studies were complete during the period from 1985 to 1999, found (inaudible) contaminated (inaudible) all air samples collected in the school. And that contaminated soil still, still is underneath of the old (inaudible) now which is closed.

Question: I have a quick question for Steve. It's Dave Ducharme at CBC Radio in Sudbury again. You alluded earlier Steve to money spent on a host of studies, lobbying, that type of thing. Any way to even estimate a dollar amount that has gone into the preliminary stages of this? And any recourse in terms of recouping some of that money?

Steve Hookimaw: Well, (inaudible) right now, we had to address to the finance department how much we (inaudible) spent on (inaudible) of a new school. And at this time, I don't have no information in front of me, but however, it's spending. And also the (inaudible) with loan that we, we had agree with the Toronto Dominion Bank to, to loan, to do a loan that's on \$30 million, but however, like there seems to be a brick wall between us and with the Indian and Northern Affairs.

Charlie Angus: Charlie Angus here. Grand Chief Stan Louttit and I, we were there when Andy Scott was the Minister and we sat, I think November of 2005, and we met with all the various levels of Indian and Northern Affairs to lay out the plans for the school. And at that meeting, Andy Scott said this plan will go ahead. He said

we will turn it over to our regional director to finalize the details. A month later, we had a letter saying we looked at everything. It's fine. So again, this has been going on and on and on where we, we have the agreement, everything's in place and then suddenly, they want another study or we have to now go back for negotiations.

So, it, it certainly makes the government look either incompetent or indifferent. How is it that they can sign agreements and give the community the assurance right up to this past September was the latest agreement based on Minister Prentice's previous commitment of last fall. We're playing this, we're like the hamster on the wheel going around and around in a circle, never seeming to get further ahead. But it costs the community each time.

Question: I just wanted, I have to get off the call. My last question is the population in Attawapiskat, what is it? And I would like to know kind of the proportion of children. Like, so if the population is like 1,400, are there 400 kids in that population?

Unidentified Male: The (inaudible) population is at 1,600.

Question: How many?

Unidentified Male: 1,600.

Question: 1,600. Okay.

Unidentified Male: And 400 elementary school students. And approximately 200 high school students.

Question: Thanks.

Unidentified Male: And you have preschoolers as well, right?

Unidentified Male: And that's not counting the (inaudible) students.

Question: And there's daycare. So that would be pre-kindergarten, or would you include kindergarten in that?

Unidentified Male: The 400 including the Junior K.

Question: Okay. JK to Grade 8, 400.

Unidentified Male: Any other questions?

Question: Question for Charlie there. It's Alan calling on the line. Just, you had referred to the government's inaction I guess on this situation as being racist. Could you explain the comment?

Charlie Angus: Well I think the term racist is actually contempt and indifferent for the founding peoples of our country. Every other community in this country has the right to proper schools, adequate funding. How is it that in Canada in the 21st century, we can have a standard that says everyone has the education right for special education for proper class sizes, except First Nations students. You know, this isn't Alabama in the 1950's and this isn't (inaudible) in the 1970's and this certainly shouldn't be the situation in Canada in 2008, that one segment of our society, one community in our country is being told that they don't have the same basic systemic rights for education as other communities.

You can read that however you want, but the way I read it is it's pretty clear that they consider, this government considers First Nations students to be of secondary value. And I think average Canadians wouldn't support that. I think students across this country wouldn't support it and we in Attawapiskat are certainly not going to support such a position.

Ron Day: And this Ron Day again from the high school. When you look at the values, and you have two different values, you know, one for whomever and one for Native people, then to me it is racist because you're looking from, you're talking from two different sides. I'll give you this and I'll give you this. Well, we should all be one, and it's not happening. So to me, that comes in as racism.

Question: Great. I have to get off the call, but thank you everybody. Lynn from CTV signing off. Bye bye.

Unidentified Male: Is this the end of our news conference.

Question: I just got one more last question myself here at Timmins base. It's for Mr. Angus.

Charlie Angus: Yes?

Question: Again, hello again.

Charlie Angus: Hello. (Inaudible)

Question: And what do you think the next step should be for the federal government?

Charlie Angus: Well we are, we are making a plan here with the community leadership. Certainly, we'll be pushing for negotiations to reopen, but we will also be starting a national education campaign because I think Attawapiskat, as much as it doesn't want to be, is now going to become a symbol for how we need to fix the federal government's educational responsibilities. And we're, we're positive about this campaign. We, we can't accept the status quo, we won't accept the status quo so

we will continue to work. Leadership will be coming to Ottawa. They'll be going to Toronto and we're going to start to work on, on building support in our schools in the Timmins region and go right, as far as we have to go. That's, that's what we will do because our students deserve, deserve it.

Unidentified Male: Okay, I think that's it.

Charlie Angus: Okay well, we thank you for everyone who participated.

Unidentified Female: Well thanks for holding it Charlie, and Chief Hall, if you're there, I mean, CTV loves to get up there. We just have to find the right time and, you know, be able to afford it because you know, it's expensive too getting flights.

Chief Theresa Hall: Yes. The easiest and less expensive to come to visit us in Attawapiskat is through the winter (inaudible). And we're only accessible from (inaudible) north. So, please do.

Unidentified Female: Okay. Thank you.

Unidentified Male: Alright. Take care. CTV, maybe you can pick us up and take us there. (Laughter)

Unidentified Female: Yeah, well okay. We can do kind of a convoy.

Unidentified Male: Yeah, we'll do that.

Unidentified Female: Okay, bye bye George.

Unidentified Male: Okay, bye guys. Thank you very much.

BACKGROUND ADVICE

The Attawapiskat First Nation is located approximately 660 km north of Thunder Bay and has an on-reserve population of approximately 1,550 people. The First Nation receives approximately \$7 million a year from the Department for its education needs. In addition, the Department has invested approximately \$5.1 million to construct an addition to the high school and to provide additional classroom space. In 2000 INAC spent approximately \$3 million to build temporary portables to replace the closed elementary school. In 2005, INAC funded approximately \$250,000 for modifications to the high school to move servicing infrastructure (electrical, computer connections, etc.) from the elementary to the secondary school.

In March 2007, in response to a submission from the First Nation, INAC approved construction of an addition to the existing high school, including three new classrooms and washrooms. INAC has approved funding (\$1,841,500) for this work, which commenced in July 2007 and is expected to be complete before the end of March 2008.

The First Nation wants to construct a new elementary school. Treasury Board approval will be required because the project is expected to cost more than \$15 million. INAC Ontario Region provided \$194,718 to the First Nation in 2006-2007 to prepare a School Capital Planning Study. The study will provide the information required for the preparation of funding approval documents. The First Nation submitted a copy of the study to INAC on November 29, 2006. On July 30, 2007, INAC agreed with the First Nation regarding the proposed size of the school. However, further revisions to the study were required. On September 26, 2007, the First Nation was advised that the J. R. Nakogee School is not in the Long Term Five-Year Capital Plan due to other priorities and that the Minister does not have the authority to provide a ministerial loan guarantee for major capital projects. Correspondence of December 4, 2006 signed by the Minister states that the Minister was not prepared to provide the lender with a ministerial loan guarantee prior to approval.

Funding pressures in the Department's Ontario Region have led to the Attawapiskat project not being included on its capital plan. A Health Canada inspection indicates the current school has no immediate health or safety concerns present.

On December 17, 2007, the First Nation was advised by the Regional Director General that no funds were currently available for a new school as other health and safety concerns have taken precedence.

On September 13, 2006, INAC's former Minister met with the First Nation in Timmins. On November 29, 2006, INAC regional officials met with the First Nation in Toronto to continue to discuss financing options and the implementation schedule.

The First Nation expects to negotiate an "Alternative to Education Capital Approach" with INAC to allow it to construct its own school. Tuition savings and interim bank financing would be required for this approach. A draft tuition proposal, provided by the First Nation, showed a cost per student amount that is above acceptable education funding levels. Another financing option is a rental agreement between the First Nation and INAC. Under this approach, the Department (or a private investor) would construct the school, and the First Nation would pay an annual rental fee to the owner. Should the First Nation seek to increase the size or the scope of the school project, it will need to do so by creating partnerships.

Media Coverage

On January 24, 2008, Timmins-James Bay MP Charlie Angus (NDP) held a news conference in Attawapiskat, highlighting the condition of the existing school facilities. On January 31, 2008, MP Angus raised the issue during Oral Questions in the House of Commons. In subsequent media reports, MP Angus said he would start a "national campaign" to highlight the issue. On, and around February 11, 2008, media reports indicated MP Angus' daughter Lola spoke to Grade 5 classmates about the school situation in Attawapiskat, asking them to write letters to the Minister. The week of March 3, 2008 highlighted a 3.5 minute YouTube video (<http://xrl.us/bhba8>) supporting the campaign for a new school. On March 6, 2008, Minister Strahl appeared on CTV's Canada AM with MP Angus discussing the school situation in Attawapiskat.

On February 11, 2008, the Timmins Daily Press quoted Ontario Education Minister Kathleen Wynne saying she is "open to discussing the idea (of) 'blended' (provincial/federal) jurisdiction" for schools in remote Ontario First Nations.

Litigation

On January 15, 2002, the First Nation and its Education Authority filed a statement of claim, seeking \$90.2 million because of the alleged impact of the 1979 fuel spill on the elementary school system. Discussions regarding an out of court settlement with the First Nation were held in late 2003 and early 2004. The issue remains before the courts.

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TB CIDM 187514

INDIAN AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA
MEDIA LINES
(for internal use only by spokespersons)

ISSUE

Proactive media lines with respect to the issue of the J.R. Nakogee Elementary School in the Attawapiskat First Nation.

Key Message/Positioning Statement

- The education of Attawapiskat First Nation students is important to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).

Media Lines

- INAC tries to prioritize spending to get the money where it is needed most.
- INAC has invested more than \$5 million for temporary classroom accommodations, as well as expansion and modification of space in the high school to allow elementary school students to also use the space.
- A new elementary school in Attawapiskat is not currently in the Region's long term capital plan. The capital plan is prioritized to take into consideration the health and safety of Ontario's First Nations.
- INAC recognizes that Attawapiskat would like to move away from portable classrooms to a permanent elementary school facility and discussions are continuing.
- Operations and maintenance of school facilities is the responsibility of First Nations. INAC provides annual funding for this purpose.

If pressed on how projects are prioritized

- INAC's National Priority Ranking Framework priorities are:
 - Protection of health and safety and assets (assets require upgrading or replacements to meet appropriate standards);
 - Health and safety improvements (upgrades of existing assets, new construction/acquisition projects to mitigate an identified significant risk to Health and Safety);
 - Recapitalization / Major Maintenance (extend the useful operating life of a facility or asset, or to maintain the original service level of the asset);
 - Growth (anticipated community growth requiring new housing, roads, schools, community buildings, etc).

BACKGROUND

The Attawapiskat First Nation, located approximately 660 kilometres north-northeast of Thunder Bay, Ontario, has approximately 2,924 members, with 1,481 living on reserve.

There are two schools in the community: the J.R. Nakogee Elementary School (JK-Grade 8)

March 3, 2008
TB CIDM 187514

Commons. In subsequent media reports, MP Angus said he would start a "national campaign" to highlight the issue. On, and around February 11, 2008, media reports indicated MP Angus' daughter Lola spoke to Grade 5 classmates about the school situation in Attawapiskat, asking them to write letters to the Minister.

On February 11, 2008, the City of Timmins' City Council passed a resolution, "petition(ing) the Federal Government through INAC to provide the funding required to construct an elementary school in Attawapiskat." The resolution is being sent to the Prime Minister, Minister Strahl, MP Angus and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities "for their endorsement and support." A copy of the resolution is available in Thunder Bay CIDM 207152.

On March 5, 2008, Timmins-James Bay MP Charlie Angus posted an online petition calling for support for a new school for Attawapiskat First Nation (<http://xrl.us/bhbaq>).

Media coverage during the week of March 3, 2008 highlighted a 3.5 minute YouTube video (<http://xrl.us/bhba8>) supporting the campaign for a new school. On March 6, 2008, Minister Strahl appeared on CTV's Canada AM with MP Angus discussing the school situation in Attawapiskat.

Public statements on Canada/Ontario "blended jurisdiction"

On February 11, 2008, the Timmins Daily Press (<http://xrl.us/bf5qw>) quoted Ontario Education Minister Kathleen Wynne saying she is "open to discussing the idea (of) 'blended' (provincial/federal) jurisdiction" for schools in remote Ontario First Nations. An editorial on February 12 (<http://xrl.us/bf5qy>) and Ontario MPP for Timmins-James Bay Gilles Bisson (NDP) have also endorsed the idea of some level of provincial involvement or jurisdiction in on-reserve schools, most recently with respect to a lack of federal funding for librarians for smaller on-reserve schools (Timmins Daily Press, February 9, 2008, <http://xrl.us/bf5tk>). Minister Wynne is quoted saying she is willing to discuss this issue with Bisson. She is also quoted saying there are "on-going discussions with INAC", but not on the specific issues facing Attawapiskat.

INAC officials are in regular contact with various Ontario ministries to discuss day-to-day operational concerns of common interest. As of February 13, 2008, INAC Ontario Region has not been approached by Ontario with any specific or general concept of "blending" of on-reserve educational jurisdiction. Self-government agreements set rules of priority on a subject-by-subject basis for federal, provincial, and Aboriginal laws to resolve any possible conflicts between these laws. Educational jurisdiction is one area such discussions can address. For more background information on self-government negotiations in Ontario, please refer to Annex 1: Aboriginal Self Government in Ontario.

Litigation

March 3, 2008
TB CIDM 187514

On January 15, 2002, the First Nation and its Education Authority filed a statement of claim, seeking \$90.2 million because of the alleged impact of the 1979 fuel spill on the elementary school system. Discussions regarding an out of court settlement with the First Nation were held in late 2003 and early 2004. The issue remains before the courts.

DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSONS

Ontario Region	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Tony Prudori Acting Senior Information Officer (807) 624-1535	Tony Prudori Acting Senior Information Officer (807) 624-1535
	TECHNICAL BACKGROUND Brian Holm Capital Management Officer (807) 624-1549

Prepared by:
Tony Prudori/Linda Britt
(807) 624-1535

Approved by:

Susan Bertrand	Acting Regional Communications Manager
Joseph Young	Regional Program Director (FS-N)
Greg Coleman	Acting Regional Communications Director
Deborah Richardson	Regional Director-General

RIDING: Timmins-James Bay

Annex 1: Aboriginal Self Government in Ontario

RISK - Ontario Region school issues / Requests for new schools	<p><u>Media Lines</u> (Consolidated for all school situations in Ontario Region) TB CDM 187514</p> <p><u>Briefing Note - Attawapiskat</u> TB CDM 198563 (for ADM)</p> <p><u>QIP Card - Attawapiskat</u> TB CDM 204913</p> <p><u>Qs and As - Attawapiskat</u> (addressing past correspondence with Attawapiskat and history) is in approvals</p> <p><u>QIP Card - BZA</u> TOR211457</p> <p><u>Quick Request (M5934) - BZA</u> TOR210891</p>	<p><u>Latest Developments</u> More videos are appearing on YouTube in support of the Attawapiskat students' request for a new school. There also continues to be extensive media coverage of this issue. The quality of reporting is poor and does not accurately reflect the situation or statements provided by departmental spokespersons.</p> <p>Media reports (Timmins Daily Press, CBC Radio Ontario Today, Radio Canada Sudbury) during the week of March 17, 2008 indicate MP Angus' letter writing campaign has reached the national level. Media also report Fort Albany First Nation showed its support to Attawapiskat that same week through events in the community.</p> <p>A letter from Minister Strahl's Director of Communications was read on CBC radio on Tuesday, March 18, 2008 noting that "MP Angus is flat out wrong when he repeatedly says a new elementary school in Attawapiskat was cancelled" and that "Minister Strahl has met with MP Angus on this issue, yet the NDP MP continues to spread inaccuracies."</p> <p>School issues in Ontario Region are garnering increasing media attention. It is also expected that school issues in other regions may also begin to be raised. For this reason, Headquarters Communications is hiring a PR firm, Hill and Knowlton, to develop a communications strategy and related products to address this issue.</p> <p><u>Background - BZA</u> The school is currently rated 7 out of 10, which means it is in fair condition. The last inspection by departmental officials took place approximately 18 months ago (2006).</p> <p>In 2004, the Department undertook an Education C project that repaired the washrooms and the ventilation system, and also upgraded classrooms. The repairs cost \$80,000.</p> <p>In 2006-2007, the Department provided a \$38,500 portable. The total size of the school is now 467 square metres, plus the 90 square metre portable.</p> <p>In March 2007, the Deputy Minister met with BZA's Chief to discuss concerns and work required on the existing school.</p> <p>The Deputy Minister recommended that the First Nation apply for funding from Education C to repair the school roof. The First Nation has not yet applied for this funding. Education C can be used for larger projects needed to repair schools.</p> <p>Smaller repairs are expected to be funded from the First Nation's operations and maintenance budget of \$48,084 (2007-2008).</p>	Minister to be kept informed as required	Ontario Region will monitor events while keeping HQ informed of any critical developments. Sr ADM is updated weekly via the Wednesday Issue Management updates, and as developments warrant.	v8
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that speaks to the number of schools completed since 2006 and number of school projects underway, and if possible, the number of these that are new schools. Due in DMO by 11 am."

Can we provide those numbers?

Susan

>>> Dan Baxter 03/11/08 1:38 PM >>>
It's slow...I'm working on it between phone calls and interruptions.

>>> Max Johnson 03/11/08 1:04 PM >>>
Looks like pressure is forthcoming. Where are we at with spreadsheet?

>>> Susan Bertrand 03/11/08 12:42 PM >>>
I was invited to participate in a teleconference at noon today with Maryse Pesant and Anne Van Dusen, SEPRO Communications Manager, to discuss the current situation respecting schools in Ontario Region and the increasing attention this issue is receiving both in the media and in the House of Commons.

Maryse is offering us assistance to be paid for out of HQ Coms. She is hiring Hill and Knowlton, a PR firm, to develop a communications strategy and associated products to address the school issue both in Ontario Region, and at the national level. The objective is to have consistent messaging and templates for all products including media lines, Letters to the Editor, QP Cards, etc. Messaging, specific to each school, will also be included.

Although this assistance is welcome, it will involve work at the regional level to work with Hill and Knowlton to come up with a list of all schools in the Region and their current situation, including efforts made and resources allocated for things like renovations, upgrades and repairs. The briefing note currently being developed by Funding Services North on the school situation in the Region is a good starting point.

Maryse noted that she will request a short timeline of April 1, 2008 to have a coms strategy in place. If any of you have questions/concerns, she indicated that you are welcome to discuss these with her. This teleconference was the first information we have received regarding this initiative.

Maryse would also like to know if we think there may be issues brewing with any other schools in the Region, i.e. requests from MPs, letters from Chiefs, etc. Please let me know if you are aware of any other school that may garner attention.

I will provide you with updates as this initiative unfolds.

Susan

CC: Jon-Paul Blais, Gus Foresto, Dan Baxter

From: Jill Caines
To: Hargitt, Daryl
Date: 1/21/2008 11:32:11 AM
Subject: Attawapiskat Media Lines and Timmins Daily Press Article

Hi Daryl,
Attached and below are lines on the Attawapiskat elementary school. An article has already ran in the Timmins Daily Press on Saturday (also below) and we have a media call from CP. Since national media (CP) are inquiring we are seeking approval for these lines at HQ. We need to respond to CP by this afternoon so are trying to get approvals as quickly as possible (hence the electronic approvals vs. a docket).

Claudette Russell indicated that this would fall under your purview. Could you please review these lines and obtain approval from Marc Brooks? FYI - they have been RDG approved.

Thanks Daryl.

Jill

INDIAN AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA (INAC)
MEDIA LINES
(for internal use only by spokespersons)

ISSUE

Delay in building of permanent elementary school in Attawapiskat due to capital pressures.

MEDIA LINES

- There is no moratorium in any capital budget areas in the INAC Ontario Region.
- Due to unusual funding pressures, INAC Ontario Region is reviewing its capital budget on an ongoing basis to ensure health and safety concerns are addressed. Some projects are deferred, but none are cancelled.
- INAC has invested more than \$3 million for temporary classroom accommodation and more than \$250,000 to modify space in the high school to allow elementary school students to also use the space. Also, a Health Canada inspection indicates the current school facilities have no immediate health or safety concerns.

If pressed on what pressures are involved

- A variety of national and regional factors have contributed to unusual funding pressures such as a skilled labour shortage, high fuel and steel costs and some emergency situations.

Timmins Daily Press: School funds axed
Sat 19 Jan 2008
Page: A1
Section: Front
Byline: Ron Grech

Parents in Attawapiskat feel they've been betrayed and let down.

A public meeting was held this week advising the community the federal government will not be funding the construction of a new school to replace the one that closed eight years ago.

The community has designs for a 5,000-square-foot elementary school, but those blueprints are simply gathering dust.

The old elementary school was closed in May 2000 because it had been constructed on a diesel fuel

**INDIAN AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA
MEDIA LINES**

(for internal use only by spokespersons)

ISSUE

Delay in building of permanent elementary school in Attawapiskat due to capital pressures.

Media Lines

- There is no moratorium in any of our capital budget areas in INAC Ontario Region.
- Due to unusual funding pressures, INAC Ontario Region is reviewing its capital budget on an ongoing basis to ensure health and safety concerns are a priority and addressed. No projects have been cancelled. Also, a Health Canada inspection indicates the current school facilities have no immediate health or safety concerns present.
- A new elementary school in Attawapiskat is not currently in the Region's long term capital plan. The capital plan is prioritized to take into consideration the health and safety of Ontario's First Nations.
- INAC has invested more than \$3 million for temporary classroom accommodations, and more than \$250,000 to modify space in the high school to allow elementary school students to also use the space.
- Officials in the Ontario Region have worked diligently with the First Nation to explore alternative funding options. Unfortunately, none of these options have proven viable so far. We will continue to work with the First Nation.

If pressed on what pressures are involved:

- A variety of factors have contributed to unusual funding pressures, such as a skilled labour shortage, high fuel and steel costs, emergency situations and health and safety related infrastructure needs.

If pressed on MP's assertion that INAC "cancelled" a \$30 million bank loan guarantee?

- No, INAC has no authority to issue any Ministerial Loan Guarantees for anything other than housing projects. Again, officials in the Ontario Region have worked with the First Nation to explore alternative funding options and are willing to continue this work.

BACKGROUND

The Attawapiskat First Nation, located approximately 660 kilometres north-northeast of Thunder Bay, Ontario, has approximately 2,924 members, with 1,481 living on reserve.

There are two schools in the community: the J.R. Nakogee Elementary School (JK-Grade 8) and the Vezina Secondary School (Grades 9-12). Initially, the two schools were housed in the same building. However, the Attawapiskat First Nation Education Authority, by way of a Band Council Resolution, closed the elementary school on May 11, 2000, due to health and safety concerns related to fuel contamination.

In response to the school's closure, the Department provided approximately \$3 million in November 2000, to build temporary portables to replace the closed elementary school.

The First Nation wants to construct a new elementary school. Treasury Board approval will be required because the project is expected to cost more than \$15 million.

INAC Ontario Region provided \$194,718 to the First Nation in 2006-2007 to prepare a School Capital Planning Study. The study will provide the information required for the preparation of funding approval documents.

The First Nation submitted a copy of the study to INAC on November 29, 2006. On July 30, 2007, INAC agreed with the First Nation regarding the proposed size of the school. However, further revisions to the study were required.

The First Nation also wants to build an evacuation centre in the new school, with an office, and sleeping and kitchen space to serve as a temporary sanctuary during any flooding. On August 3, 2007, INAC approved approximately 226 square metres (2432.6 square feet) for such a space.

On September 26, 2007, the First Nation was advised that the J. R. Nakogee School is not in the Long Term Five-Year Capital Plan due to other priorities and that the Minister does not have the authority to provide a ministerial loan guarantee for major capital projects. Correspondence of December 4, 2006 signed by the Minister states that the Minister was not prepared to provide the lender with a ministerial loan guarantee prior to approval.

A revised final draft copy of the study was submitted to the Department on November 29, 2007, and is currently being reviewed.

On December 17, 2007, the First Nation was advised by the Regional Director General not to proceed with the funding approval. The school will be reconsidered for inclusion on the capital plan after other funding pressures have

been addressed.

Litigation

On January 15, 2002, the First Nation and its Education Authority filed a statement of claim, seeking \$90.2 million because of the alleged impact of the 1979 fuel spill on the elementary school system. Discussions regarding an out of court settlement with the First Nation were held in late 2003 and early 2004. While the issue remains before the courts, the action is not moving forward because of progress being made on a new school for the community.

DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSONS

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(807) 624-1535

Approved by:

Susan Bertrand	Acting Regional Communications Manager
Joseph Young	Regional Program Director (FS-N)
Greg Coleman	Acting Regional Communications Director
Deborah Richardson	Regional Director-General

RIDING: Timmins-James Bay

not on that short list.

>>Andrew: But this portable, from what Charlie Angus says, the NDP MP who has been spearheading their campaign to get a new facility built, they say that these kids are attending classes in winter coats because it's so cold that the windows don't close properly and the fire doors don't open. Aren't those health and safety concerns?

>>Minister Strahl: Well, they absolutely are and I haven't seen examples that Charlie is talking about. There's a budget, of course, for maintaining the school and that will be a priority. There's a lot of money given for that and so if there's shortcomings, if the window doesn't close, it needs to be fixed and if the door doesn't open, let's get it fixed. But Charlie has a habit, you know, of making things important to Charlie, unfortunately and whether it's - I have correspondence with him on outrageous claims and it's always personal and he says I moved to shut down the school construction. I mean I'm moving to build as many schools and to do as many things as we can, but the truth is you can't do it all in one year and you can't do it all at any moment in time if other facilities are burned down. You do what you can with the funds you've got.

>>Andrew: This may be important to Charlie but from some of the pictures that I saw it's important to the kids, and they were holding up signs saying, please give us a school and we need a school. One of the signs was particularly cynical, but I don't think you can blame them. And it said we don't have a real school and if the federal government has its way we never will.

>>Minister Strahl: Right. Well, obviously the kids want new and bigger facilities, I understand that. On the other hand, I think that people understand what's going on here to with Charlie and others. You can build a mighty sign and you can make a pile of noise out of it but the truth is that we have to prioritize based on health and safety. Now, of course we'll continue to work with the community. We're looking at options and we're talking to the Chief and Council, and Charlie himself came to me just in December looking at a different financing option that we examined at his request. I mean, things continue. His proposition that, you know, doomsday scenario that nobody cares and nobody wants to build it is simply not true.

>>Andrew: The Minister of Indian Affairs, Chuck Strahl talking to us from Ottawa.

Jim Hurcomb

To access Newsdesk directly, visit <http://newsdesk>.
Pour l'accès direct à Infomedia, veuillez visiter <http://infomedia>

From: Tony Prudori
To: Taia Tarvainen
Date: 2/14/2008 11:28:33 AM
Subject: Re: DOCKET DISCREPANCY: Attawapiskat/school

Ladies & gents, mystery solved - it appears the \$2M is correct....

Well, I just spoke with Brian, who said to me, "oh, that includes a \$1.8M addition to the high school that is in progress". Although the \$1.8M addition isn't ONLY to accomodate elementary school students, some of the space can be used for this purpose. When I asked him why he hadn't mentioned this earlier, he said, "I didn't want to bother you with having to explain the concept" (or words to that effect).

Thanks, all, for your patience - I will be updating our Media Lines shortly.

<<TONY>>

>>> Taia Tarvainen 2/14/08 11:06:26 AM >>>

The docket said \$250,000 until Jan. 23, then it was changed by either Brian Holm or maybe even Greg - I can't for sure tell. There is \$2 million highlighted as a change in the cidms version of Jan. 30. This particular letter has been looked at numerous times since then by Funding Services and Leigh and RDG. If the \$2 million figure is incorrect, then that is surprising.

>>> Tony Prudori 02/14/08 10:52 AM >>>

I was checking the most recent Ministerial docket for Charlie Angus on Attawapiskat (Z21169/Z22491, attached) for material for other products, and this paragraph jumped out at me:

"The Department has invested more than \$3 million for temporary classroom accomodation, and **more than \$2 million for modifications in the high school to accomodate the use of space by Attawapiskat's elementary school students.**"

The figure that's been used in other correspondence (like another letter to the Chief (attached)) as well as in media interviews (based on RDG-approved media lines, also attached) is **more than \$250,000** for modifications to the high school.

Thought you'd want to know....

CC: Gail York; Greg Coleman; Linda Britt; Susan Bertrand

From: Leigh Jessen
To: Tanya Crimp, Joseph Young, Max Johnson
Date: 3/8/2008 9:55:38 AM
Subject: Re: Attawapiskat letters

Thank you Max.

-----Original Message-----

From: Max Johnson
To: Joseph Young <YoungJ@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Tanya Crimp <CrimpT@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
CC: Mary-Ann Avella <AvellaMA@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Susan Bertrand <BertrandSE@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Brian Holm <HolmB@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Leigh Jessen <JessenL@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Kelly Maurice <MauriceK@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Deborah Richardson <RichardsonD@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Taia Tarvainen <TarvainenT@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Creation Date: 3/8 9:49 am
Subject: Re: Attawapiskat letters

will provide first thing Monday am

>>> Tanya Crimp 03/07/08 2:37 PM >>>
Hi Joe,

MO called about the Attawapiskat letters to the MP and the Chief. The haven't sent them because they are inconsistent in terms of the funding provided to Attawapiskat ???

The letter to the MP states that INAC has provided more than 250 K towards the temp school but the letter to the Chief states that INAC has provided more than 2M and our media lines state that INAC has provided more than 5M so they want to know what the correct figures are.

Please advise asap.

Thank you.
Tanya

p.s. Tracking #s are ON4397 and Z21169

CC: Taia Tarvainen, Deborah Richardson, Kelly Maurice, Brian Holm, Susan Bertrand, Mary-Ann Avella

From: Greg Coleman
To: Exec Services and Comms - Ontario
Date: 3/18/2008 10:50:11 AM
Subject: Terminology - what's "in" the LTCP, internal and external documents/messaging

I've had some concerns about certain capital projects being "in" the Long Term Capital Plan, but only as a note under "future years" i.e. it's not really part of the plan. For clarity, Funding Services directors will be asking their staff not to state that a project "in the plan" unless funding is identified to flow within the five-year scope of the plan. Any project that has dollars flowing only as a note under "future years" are officially not in the plan, and all documents and messaging should reflect that.

I can clarify further at the staff meeting if you wish, but the key thing is to watch for any reference to a project being "in the plan for future years" or some variant on that.

Thank you,
Greg

>>> Bob Maguire 03/18/08 9:11 AM >>>
Greg:

Excellent point and I agree with you. I recommend that if the project is in Future years it is not currently on the plan based upon some recent discussions like this I have had with the RDG.

Robert (Bob) Maguire
A/Associate Regional Director General, South
Ontario Region, INAC
416-973-8111
416-525-2800 cell
Sent by blackberry wireless

-----Original Message-----

From: Greg Coleman
To: Leigh Jessen <JessenL@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Joseph Young <YoungJ@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Bob Maguire <MaguireB@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Steve White <WhiteS@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
CC: Susan Bertrand <BertrandSE@inac-ainc.gc.ca>
Creation Date: 3/18 9:06 am
Subject: Terminology - what's "in" the LTCP

Not trying to split hairs unnecessarily, but I'm looking at the Cat Lake school briefing note and have a question. It states Cat Lake is in (on) the LTCP, but deferred to future years, or on the plan in "future years budget," or on the plan "no cash flow indicated."

With Attawapiskat, when funds still appeared in "future years" but not within the actual plan's five-year scope, we've publicly said "not currently in the capital plan." Is it possible to make a decision for both internal and external documents that something is "in the plan" if cash flows within the five years, and not in the plan but identified by the Region as a future requirement when funds appear only in the "future years" column? My concern is someone waving a briefing note with "in the plan" in the House, and our having to get into long explanations about "future years," the plan's five-year scope, etc. that no one will hear.

Thanks,
Greg

From: Susan Bertrand
Sent: 2/11/2008 1:29:39 PM
To: Tony Prudori;Greg Coleman;Brock Worobel
CC:
BCC:
Subject: Re: Fwd: CBC Radio on Attiwapascacat

Just FYI. I spoke to him about two weeks ago about this issue.

Go ahead and respond. Basically, our message is nothing has changed... and deliver the lines. Stick to them to the letter!! This is another one that just isn't going to go away.

Susan

>>> Brock Worobel 02/11/08 12:59 PM >>>
Hi there,

I can respond to this if you want Susan. I'll deliver the lines that we have on them. Let me know.

Brock Worobel
Communications Officer
Executive Services and Communications
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Ontario Region
Toronto, CANADA
T/416.973.2158 C/416.428.0503

>>> Margot Geduld Monday, February 11, 2008 12:46:57 PM >>>
Dave Ducharme, CBC Radio Sudbury, 705-688-3210

They are seeking a taped interview to give INAC an opportunity to update on the situation with the delay at Attiwapascacat school. He indicated that this story keep coming back and they would like to reexamine as a result of letter writing campaign by students in Cobalt.

Are you able to handle in the region?

From: Susan Bertrand
Sent: 2/13/2008 4:44:32 PM
To: PublicAffairs Public Affairs Team
CC:
BCC:
Subject: Media Relations Report - Ontario Region

Lenny Carpenter (Wawatay News (705) 360-4556) called for a clarification as to why First Nations such as Attawapiskat and North Spirit Lake are not getting new schools, specifically what are the funding pressures that Ontario Region is facing. I deliver the MO approved line that funding pressures include a skilled labour shortage, high fuel and steel costs and emergency situations. The reporter had no further questions.

Susan E. Bertrand
A/Manager Communications Operations and Media Relations
Executive Services and Communications
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
100 Anemki Drive - Suite 101
Thunder Bay, Ontario P7J 1A5
Telephone: (807) 624-1531
Fax: (807) 623-8304
bertrandse@inac.gc.ca

RDG approved March 17, 2008
TB CIDM 210470

Annex 3

Background: Wabaseemoong First Nation School

In 1999-2000, INAC Ontario Region provided \$88,000 to the First Nation to complete a School Capital Planning Study. The new school was scheduled for construction in 2001-2004. However, due to issues related to the water and wastewater treatment plants, the funding for construction of the school was re-allocated to the construction of the water and wastewater treatment plants.

The First Nation began preparations of the Preliminary Project Approval (PPA) submission in September, 2005. Ontario Region granted PPA in February 2006. Because the cost of the school project was estimated at over \$15 million, the PPA submission was forwarded to INAC Headquarters in February 2006 for approval. In November 2006, Ontario Region was given direction to process the PPA for the design funding. Smith Carter Architects will have the design complete for the First Nation by the end of March 2008.

In January 2007, the Department provided \$100,000 to clean up the school, and to remediate mold and air quality issues within the school which led to a temporary school closure from January 15 through 29, 2007.

In December 2007, the First Nation was advised that Ontario Region is facing significant financial pressures against its Capital Facilities and Maintenance program. Consequently, the construction of the new school in Wabaseemoong has been moved into future years in the Region's long term capital plan.

The Department offered to purchase three portable classrooms in January 2008 to assist the First Nation in managing overcrowding in the existing school, however, the First Nation rejected this offer.

Funding for community infrastructure projects

Since 2001, INAC Ontario Region provided approximately \$15 million for various infrastructure projects in the community, including \$6.3 million in 2001-2002 for a new wastewater treatment plant, \$8.0 million in 2003-2004 for a new water treatment plant and tower, and \$250,000 in 2004-2005 for a youth centre. INAC Ontario Region also allocated \$270,000 in 2004-2005 for Education AC@ repairs and a portable for the existing school.

Z21169

Mr. Charlie Angus, MP
House of Commons
OTTAWA ON K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Angus:

Thank you for your letter of November 19, 2007, regarding the need for a new elementary school at the Attawapiskat First Nation.

I appreciate the need for providing a positive learning environment for students, and the challenges that First Nation Education Authorities face in delivering education services. Your commitment to First Nations in addressing these challenges is to be commended.

On December 6, 2007, my Ontario regional staff received the final draft of the Attawapiskat First Nation's School Capital Planning Study. This study is the first step in the Treasury Board's submission process that you referenced in your letter. We will provide the First Nation with our comments as soon as possible.

It has taken almost three years to get to this stage of the funding approval process, and the Department has done everything in its power to move this important project forward. However, in the time since your March 10, 2005 meeting and the Department's receipt of the First Nation's School Capital Planning Study, exceptional funding pressures have arisen for the Department's Ontario Region. This has caused a number of new school projects to be deferred into future years, including Attawapiskat First Nation's. This message was communicated to the Attawapiskat First Nation Education Authority through its spokesperson, on December 17, 2007.

I trust that this information is of assistance. Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

Chuck Strahl

000862