



Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta

To Protect, Promote, Bring to Life, Implement, and Sustain the True Spirit and Intent of Treaty No. 8 as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the waters flow.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Chiefs Call For Alberta Government To Put A Stop To Spraying

Edmonton, Alberta – March 8, 2019 – Chiefs within Treaty 8 are calling on the Province of Alberta to act and stop the spraying of herbicide's including but not limited to forestry cutblocks, powerpole locations and transmission line corridors. This practice, especially by those in the forestry industry, is having detrimental effects on the surrounding wildlife and associated waterbodies. In the case of forestry, when harvested cutblocks are replanted with tree saplings they are sprayed to reduce flora competition in the area, allowing the planted saplings to grow faster.

“The areas where they are spraying these chemicals still have wildlife in them. Our hunters and trappers are reporting reduced wildlife in the surrounding areas where this is being done. We are concerned because moose love to go into cutblocks and eat the new plants as they grow up. If these chemicals and herbicides have contaminated the soil or the plants and are being consumed by wildlife it would explain the noticeable reduction in the moose population we are seeing on the land,” states Arthur Noskey, Grand Chief of Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta before continuing, “this directly affects our Treaty right to trap and gather food in the traditional way we always have.”

Popular herbicides such as Roundup have been in the news as having a much higher toxicity than originally thought to the point that they have been labeled a probable human carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC).

“If these herbicides can cause cancer in humans, what are they doing to the animals? We can't say specifically because no one seems willing to study this. In the meantime we are left with shrinking wildlife populations,” states Grand Chief Noskey before continuing “the Chiefs are calling on the government for a moratorium on this spraying until an independent scientific review can be conducted. Our Treaty has guaranteed us a right to live traditionally, including hunting and trapping, jeopardizing the wildlife population affects us, our children and the average Albertan.”

Treaty First Nations have a Treaty Right to hunt, trap and fish that is protected under Treaty No. 8 and upheld under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that states “Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals.”

At a meeting held on February 23rd in Wabasca, Alberta, the Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta Trappers Association voiced their concerns with this practice as it directly impacts their livelihoods. The Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta Trappers Association is a group of Trappers, Elders and members from across Northern Alberta that promotes, protects and advocates on behalf of Trappers. These transmission corridors being sprayed were specifically a huge issue for them. Local Treaty 8 trappers have collected pictures of the internal organs of wildlife they have harvested that shows the extent of the damage. This has caused so much concern that they recently passed a resolution

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directing that “the spraying of these three chemicals [herbicides] in the Alberta Treaty 8 territory be banned immediately.”

We believe that Alberta needs to enact a moratorium on herbicide spraying would ensure that we are doing the best we can to protect Alberta’s natural resources while we study the true level of harm that this practice is causing.

In addition, poisons such as strychnine is still being used by the Alberta government to manage coyotes, wolves and bear populations. This practice of using this poison is not banned in Alberta and has even resulted in household pets accidentally being exposed and subsequently killed. Using these in a natural ecosystem can have unintended exposure to other animal populations.

“We must ensure we are not doing long term harm for short term profits,” concludes the Grand Chief.

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