



**INDIAN
RESOURCE
COUNCIL**

IRC Inc.

irccanada.ca

OPEN LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER JUSTIN TRUDEAU

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

We are writing this letter on behalf of the Indian Resource Council (IRC) which represents over 130 First Nations who produce or have direct interest in the oil and gas industry. There are currently about 50 First Nations who are actively engaged in oil and gas production on their lands.

These Nations are facing an unprecedented crisis resulting from the collapse of oil and gas prices and the COVID-19 pandemic. Our oil and gas royalties from all currently producing First Nations have collapsed from a high of \$256 million a year at the market's peak, to just under \$1.2 million this past month - a loss of almost \$240M. These royalties have been essential to the general well-being of our people and our Nations. They pay for such things as elder services, housing, cultural programs, bereavement costs, recreation centres and generally supplement programs and services that are chronically underfunded by the Federal government or not funded at all. They provide us with the necessary autonomy in spending that we do not have with Federal funding. We are now forced to cut essential jobs and programs at exactly the time when our communities need them the most.

The Federal government has stepped up in the past two months to financially assist many industries, businesses and workers throughout Canada to get through these rough times. However, we are falling through the cracks. We strongly believe the First Nations oil and gas industry should be treated equally and deserve support, perhaps even more, since Canada has an ongoing legal and fiduciary responsibility to manage these resources. It is a sad fact that Indigenous Services Canada and its Special Operating Agency, Indian Oil and Gas Canada (IOGC), are now spending far more to manage our resources than we are earning royalties from them.

We want to impress upon you that we are in this situation today not only because of low oil prices, which is a market problem, but because the management of our oil and gas resources by the Federal government has left us extremely vulnerable to market turbulence.

The Federal government as our Treaty partner and trustee are legally bound to manage our resources in our best interests. We have little authority over our own oil and gas resources and royalties. Our Treaty relationship is paramount to our people and Nations. Canada is obligated to act honourably in their dealings with Indigenous Peoples based on the Treaty principles of mutual respect, co-operation and partnership. We are asking that you put these principles into action during this time of need and provide us with the relief we require as you have done for other groups.

As you have stated many times Prime Minister, these are extraordinary times which require extraordinary measures and solutions. We need your leadership to secure additional Federal funding immediately to enable us to survive this crisis in order for us to continue to build a stronger Canada and stronger Indigenous Nations, together.

Makiinima (Chief Roy Fox, Blood Tribe, AB)
Chairman, Indian Resource Council of Canada

Signed on behalf of the IRC Board and Major First Nations Oil/Gas Producers:

Chief Clifford Poucette
Wesley First Nation, AB

Chief Greg Desjarlais
Frog Lake First Nation, AB

Councillor Vinnie Saddleback
Samson Cree Nation, AB

Chief Jim Badger
Sucker Creek First Nation, AB

Chief Henry Lewis
Onion Lake Cree Nation, SK

Chief Brady O'Watch
Carry the Kettle First Nation, SK

Councillor Bernard Shepherd
Whitebear First Nation, SK

Delbert Wapass
Thunderchild First Nation, SK

Chief Darlene Hunter
Halfway First Nation, BC

Chief Duke Peltier
Wiikwemkoong First Nation, ON

Chief Ouray Crowfoot
Siksika Nation, AB

Chief Roger Marten
Cold Lake First Nations, AB

Chief Billy Morin
Enoch Cree Nation, AB

Chief Doug Beaverbones
O'Chiese First Nation, AB

Chief Ivan Sawan
Loon River First Nation, AB

Chief Antoine Duane
Poundmaker First Nation, SK

Chief Jeremy Norman
Flying Dust First Nation, SK