



DEHCHO FIRST NATIONS

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Candidates Respond to DFN Questions on Devolution

The Government of the NWT has frequently proclaimed that it is committed to recognizing the inherent right of Aboriginal self-government. In 2001 the GNWT signed a Framework Agreement with the Dehcho First Nations and Canada. In that agreement they promised to negotiate land and governance issues through the Dehcho Process. However, in 2010 the GNWT broke that promise by negotiating and signing an AiP on devolution with Canada. In the devolution AiP the GNWT ignores their commitment to the DFN and instead commits to negotiating most land and governance issues through the devolution process, which does not include the DFN.

On Sept. 20, 2011 Grand Chief Gargan wrote to the candidates running to represent the Nahendeh and Dehcho ridings, asking them to state their positions on whether the devolution process should be suspended pending the completion of an AiP in the Dehcho Process. Gargan also asked them whether, in the event devolution proceeds, they would support or oppose territorial legislation mirroring Canada's outdated free entry system for mineral exploration. The candidates were asked to provide their responses by Sept. 26.

Michael Nadli and Michael McLeod, running to represent Dehcho riding, provided responses, as did Bertha Norwegian, who is running to represent Nahendeh.

All three candidates who have responded have promised that they will oppose the devolution process and demand that it be suspended until the Dehcho Process has progressed to an AiP. We were pleasantly surprised by Michael's McLeod's opposition to the devolution AiP since he was part of the cabinet that endorsed the signing of that agreement, but we welcome the statements of all candidates.

Grand Chief Gargan said: "We thank the candidates for their responses and we trust that our members will use this information in deciding who they will vote for on October 3."

The full statements of the candidates are available from the DFN upon request.

-Ends-

Further Info contact: Grand Chief Samuel Gargan - 867.695.2355