



MARTEN FALLS FIRST NATION #65

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MARTEN FALLS FIRST NATION DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY DUE TO WATER TREATMENT PLANT SHUTDOWN

Marten Falls First Nation has declared a state of emergency in the community due to a shutdown of the water treatment plant. The community has been without water for 2 days now and people are left without drinking water and sewage is starting to back up. This is a community crisis that could have been avoided with a firm commitment from the federal government in continuing operations and maintenance that is paid in a timely manner, but the community is left to deal with this emergency now.

Delayed operation and maintenance (O&M) funding and insufficient amounts compound regular challenges to a breaking point. Marten Falls wants to put an end to this type of consistent emergency management and work towards sustainable ways of community management. That is why we are calling for enhancements to community capacity, including increases in O&M funding and band support funding.

Chief Bruce Achneepineskum says that “as we deal with this state of emergency, we continue to worry about 2 other potential community level disasters. With a lack of housing, we deal with homelessness and overcrowding. We don’t even have residences for teachers coming to our community. This can flare a COVID outbreak at any point and we have been fortunate to avoid that till now. We have also been lobbying for fire suppression equipment for a while and we don’t have anything. The worry of a house catching a fire keeps me up at night and we must work with the federal and provincial governments to address this. But for now, I need to get my community to safety and get the water working again. I am calling for an evacuation unless this can be resolved within a day or so.”

Currently all services in Marten Falls are without water. The nursing station, police service, the school and community buildings have no water. These are critical services at risk of complete shutdown. It is not possible to live in the community in this situation and as the community prepares for a 4th COVID wave, members of the community cannot even undertake basic health measure like hand washing. The Chief and Council of Marten Falls are calling on the government to work with them to help evacuate the community and to bring the water back online immediately. They are also calling on the government of Canada to work with them on the provision of 15-20 houses immediately required in the community as well as fire suppression equipment to avoid future disasters.

For more information contact:

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