Re: Métis Nation BC Continues Road to More Division

Members and Partners,

Recently the other Métis representative organization Métis Nation BC refused to meet with BC Métis Federation in a letter from their President Clara Morin Dal Col. This letter appears to justify refusing to meet with the BC Métis Federation through a personal attack against BC Métis Federation President Mr. Keith Henry and does not reflect the actions or qualities of leadership for the best interests of all Métis in BC.

Unfortunately, Métis Nation BC President Clara Morin Dal Col continued her division with another correspondence on behalf of Métis Nation BC to one of their partner communities from Surrey, the Nova Métis Heritage Association (Nova). Métis Nation BC has signed agreements (Charter Agreements) with a number of Métis community organizations in British Columbia. Nova President Mr. Ken Fisher is well known and has been a strong advocate of accountability, which a number of former and current Métis Nation BC leaders and supporters have found inconvenient and bothersome for years.

Nova is the largest Métis community organization in British Columbia with well over 2000 members. This organization has been active for years providing advocacy and representation for the Métis community in Surrey. Métis Nation BC and Nova signed their Charter Agreement in October 2005 (enclosed).

Therefore, this correspondence is written to raise glaring inconsistencies in the latest Métis Nation BC letter to Nova despite a legal agreement that seems to be ignored. Sadly, these actions signal the same tactics implemented by Métis Nation BC leaders in 2009-2012 when they attacked individuals or communities who spoke out against their decisions or asked tough questions.

Read our perspective and ask yourself if the letter from Métis Nation BC letter seems fair, just, or reasonable.

According to the Métis Nation BC letter they are commencing action to terminate their agreement with Nova based on 4 issues:

1. Allegedly Nova board members do not have MNBC Citizenship Cards

BC Métis Federation questions the role of Métis Nation BC to dictate who members of this community elect as their board. According to Métis Nation BC section 2.6 of the agreement suggest that somehow Nova is non-compliant. In our view the language does not in fact state this and moreover Nova encourages their members to consider membership with Métis Nation BC.
We question whether Métis Nation BC did this same assessment with all of the community organizations they have their signed charter agreements with. If not, why in light of their approach in this case of Nova?

2. Alleged failure of Nova to notify MNBBC of community meetings for last 4 years

This is incorrect and attached is one example of an agenda from the most recent Nova Annual General Meeting held March 2016. The agenda included the opportunity for Métis Nation BC to present an update to the members. Despite the invitation no representative from Métis Nation BC attended. Refer to #10 Affiliation Reports.

By contrast Métis Nation BC has not attended or provided any financial reporting and less than $2000.00 for support to the Nova community capacity in the last five years. This is shocking considering the millions of dollars provided to Métis Nation BC from various government and industry on behalf of Nova members.

3. Allegations of failure by Nova to provide Nova financial statements

This is incorrect as Nova has provided updated financial reporting for their membership. The members in attendance have approved regular financial reports on a consistent basis.

4. Allegation that Nova did not notify members of Annual General Meetings

This is incorrect and members are notified well in advance through email, phone calls via board members, weekly Métis Matters Radio Show notifications and other social media channels. Attached is one example of a notice from Nova to members in 2015 which was sent over 30 days prior to members and partners.

This latest action by Métis Nation BC is all about politics and maneuvering to get rid of Nova President Mr. Ken Fisher and Nova. The excuses listed by Métis Nation BC can all be proven factually incorrect and are completely contrary to the agreement between these organizations or the Métis Nation BC Constitution. MNBBC Constitution Section 59 states:

In the event that a Community is in contravention of the terms of its Community Governance Charter or of the provisions of the MNBBC Constitution, the MNBBC will do all within its ability to assist the community to come into compliance within the Community Governance Charter and/or MNBBC Constitution as the case may be and, in the event the Community, in the discretion of the MNBBC, remains or continues to be non-compliant, the MNBBC shall make such recommendations to the MNGA as may be deemed appropriate, with the effect of dissolving that community’s Community Governance Charter and affiliation with the MNBBC.

http://www.mnbcc.ca/media/attachments/view/doc/mnbcc_constitution_as_ratified_at_agm_2015_final_2/pdf
The key to the Métis Nation constitutional obligation is what steps did Métis Nation BC take to do all within its ability to assist Nova? There has been no request for meetings, no discussions, no contact from the newly elected Métis Nation BC Lower Mainland Regional Director; just drastic steps and threats to terminate.

By contrast Métis Nation BC also has obligations under this signed 2005 agreement. These are clearly defined in the agreement which essentially obliges Métis Nation BC to ensure they support the community (Nova). Has Métis Nation BC communicated and included Nova? In the first example contrary to this Nova was strongly disputing the position of the local school district (School District #36) about Métis representation on the Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement Committee. Despite obligations in 2014 Nova was ignored:

Email to BC Métis Federation 2014 from Nova President Fisher

I did finally talk to Gloria Raphael (SD36 Aboriginal Principal) and had a discussion with her about my position on the SDS36 Aboriginal Education Council which was previously loosely held by Elder Mr. Alvin Myhre. At a recent Nova Metis special Board meeting Alvin was removed from any position he may have held as a Metis rep for Nova Metis Heritage Association. He was too stay on as a Metis Elder which was actually his function and he was expected to report back to me (as Nova President) of any significant happenings etc. In his place the board (5) appointed me to take the [position as rep of Metis on that Ab. Ed. Council. Alvin seemed to accept that decision in good faith and he said he would notify the School district aka Gloria Raphael. I heard nothing from him, her or anyone for almost a month so I decided it was time to make contact and take on the position. I had not heard from anyone at SD36 since I signed the 5 year "enhancement Agreement on June 1st, 2013 on behalf of the Metis people in Surrey.

When I eventually talked to her on the phone after many attempts she informed me that she received a call from a Mr. Bruce Dumont, the President of MNBC and he verbally appointed Alvin Myhre to the position which we had removed him. It seems that Alvin had turned on us and contacted them at MNBC. Of course, MNBC President Bruce Dumont agreed to appoint him as a way of thwarting our efforts. This tactic cannot go unchallenged as it pits Metis against Metis to the detriment of our Metis students and all of us.

She claimed he said he was “the President of the Provincial Metis and the only officially recognized Metis organization in BC”. She seemed ready to accept that. I ARGUED THAT WE AT NOVA METIS HAD represented local Metis issues over the last 10 or more years and we are the local Metis Community and asked her why she would accept such an absurd verbal declaration from MNBC? She said then that she didn't want to get involved in the Metis "political" issues and for now that was her view of who was actually the rep as it came from a provincial Metis group and this implied that was the proper authority as she seemed to see it. After much objection from me she stated that I could attend the next meeting of the “Aboriginal Education Council” on January 16th, 2014 to state my case too them. Seeing as how I was getting nowhere, I agreed to do that. The situation and this interference in our local issues by MNBC is a cheap way of trying to mix things up for our people and will only lead to more mis-understanding of Metis identity and culture. The overall perception of the west Coast influence of 1st Nations in this cause is a fight we will have to take on or else we walk away. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely, Ken J. Fisher President - Nova Metis Heritage Association - Surrey, BC.
Worse yet in March of 2016 Métis Nation BC representatives introduced a motion to remove Nova President Ken Fisher from one of their governance meetings, the Métis Nation Governing Assembly. The resolution was advanced by Métis Nation BC representation without any discussion with the Nova board as to the rationale why or clear unambiguous language and proof about any alleged and unproven conflict of interest. Enclosed is the resolution with some additional text from Nova President Fisher. In these two examples there is clear evidence of Métis Nation BC’s lack of due diligence to work with Nova as a board or community elected leadership group.

A further analysis of how Métis Nation BC President Clara Morin Dal Col is handling conflict poorly is illustrated when you consider legal standing of the Métis Nation BC chartered communities. According to these agreements the community organizations are to remain in good standing as a society. BC Métis Federation completed a corporate search February 6 of a sample of 7 of these organizations:

1. Northwest BC Métis Association – Terrace  
2. North Fraser Métis Association – Burnaby  
3. North East Métis Association – Dawson Creek  
4. Prince George Métis Community Association – Prince George  
5. Kootenay South Métis Society - Trail  
6. Alberni Clayquot Métis Association – Port Alberni  
7. Nicola Valley and District Métis Society – Merritt

The attached evidence continues to demonstrate the years of incompetence in Métis Nation BC support for Métis community capacity. If Métis Nation BC actually reviewed the items being alleged with Nova, the 5 of 7 we reviewed should have been addressed as well. In fact, some of these organizations have been in bad standing for years.

It is clear Métis Nation BC is attempting to discredit Nova and individuals such as their President Ken Fisher. In Their allegations are without facts, legal standing, and are being used to deny Nova their voice within Métis Nation BC governance and decision making. Ironically Nova is one of the few Métis societies in good standing at the BC corporations branch and we estimate no less than half of their chartered agreement community partners would not satisfy this requirement.

BC Métis Federation is not surprised by these actions as this sets another step backwards for Métis Nation BC. These actions are being orchestrated to likely terminate the agreement with Nova and then Métis Nation BC will likely push for another Métis representative organization in Surrey. This speaks to the serious flaws in Métis Nation BC governance and ideologies. In an era of implied reconciliation, we find these Métis Nation BC actions inconceivable and troubling.

How industry and governments can continue to support this negative behavior is unfair, puzzling and absolutely unjust for all Métis people. What ever happened to the concept of unity and fair play while working for the common good in everyone’s interest? Is this not true democracy?

You be the judge but read the facts, they paint the true picture.
Encl.  MNBC Letter to Nova January 19th, 2017
MNBC and Nova Charter Agreement October 2005
Nova AGM March 6th, 2016
Notice of Annual General Meeting Nova February 21st, 2015
Resolution – Remove KJF March 2016 MNBC
MNBC Chartered Community Corporate Standing as of February 6, 2017