



BCMF Rejects AFN National Chief's Remarks on Métis Identity, Calls for Métis Unity

MEDIA RELEASE

Vancouver, British Columbia — October 28, 2026 — The BC Métis Federation (BCMF) strongly disagrees with remarks about Métis identity made by Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak. Speaking on October 26 at the First Nations–First Ministers' Meeting in Ottawa, the National Chief suggested that many people who identify as Métis are in fact First Nations people whose identities were shaped by government policies that excluded them from their bands.

BCMF acknowledges the injustice behind those remarks. For generations, colonial governments divided Indigenous families, restricted band membership and decided who would be recognized as Indian, Inuit, Métis or neither. But that history does not mean Métis people were created by government policy, and it gives no government or political organization the authority to redefine or dismiss Métis identity. Canada itself recognized Métis land interests when it negotiated Treaty 8, appointing a separate commission to address Métis claims through scrip, a process that reached into northeastern British Columbia. Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* recognizes the Métis as a distinct Indigenous people, and that recognition is not subject to anyone else's political approval.

This is a moment for Métis people to stand together. BCMF calls on Métis organizations across Canada to set aside their differences and work together, in a spirit of mutual recognition, for all Métis in Canada. Whatever divides Métis organizations on other questions, a challenge to the existence of the Métis as a people is a challenge to all of them.

“Distinction does not require erasure, and protecting First Nations rights does not require denying Métis history,” said BCMF President Keith Henry. “Métis organizations don't always agree, but on this we must speak with one voice. The Métis are a distinct people, and that is not for any other government or organization to decide.”

BCMF respects First Nations title, rights and self-determination, and recognizes how deeply the histories of Métis and First Nations families are intertwined. Métis people want to strengthen those relationships, not deepen divisions, and Indigenous peoples should never be pushed into



competing for a recognition that colonial governments controlled in the first place. BCMF invites the National Chief to clarify her remarks and to engage respectfully with Métis leadership, in the hope that this moment leads to better understanding between Métis and First Nations peoples.

BCMF's backgrounder, [*Métis History Cannot Be Erased for Political Convenience*](#), sets out the historical record behind this position, including Treaty 8 and Métis scrip, Métis participation at the First Ministers' table from 1983 to the 2005 Kelowna Accord, and BCMF's *Follow the Scrip* research.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Backgrounder – *Métis History Cannot Be Erased for Political Convenience* – Oct 2026 – [bcmétis.com \(PDF\)](#)

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ABOUT BCMF

[The BC Métis Federation \(BCMF\)](#) is a non-profit association that works with Métis communities to ensure the well-being of BCMF members. Through grassroots efforts, BCMF advocates on behalf of its many members living all across the province.

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