CONGRESS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

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For immediate release

Reconciliation Council Bill an Illusion of Inclusion

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The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is calling on MP's to immediately reverse its plans for the National Reconciliation Council – Bill C-29. In its current form, the bill excludes hundreds of thousands of Metis, status and Non-status Indians and southern Inuit.

The Reconciliation Council is a product of Bill C-29 which the Liberals introduced two years ago. Under the proposed legislation, the Council would be considered a not-for-profit corporation comprised of nine to 13 directors. Last year, opposition members put forward an amendment to include CAP and our voices in the council, but Liberal MP's heartlessly voted against the change. Likewise, in the Senate, Senators failed to include CAP's communities and instead chose politics over Indigenous people.

"Again today, in the House of Commons, the Indigenous Crown Relations Minister tried to pass this bill off as being inclusive," says CAP National Chief Elmer St. Pierre. "That's the farthest thing from the truth, considering his political bias against our people, and his unwillingness to listen to all Indigenous Peoples."

The creation of the National Council for Reconciliation is a "Call to Action" from the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' 2015 report. It is vital that urban Indigenous voices and CAP have a seat at the table. CAP represents the voices of thousands of urban indigenous Peoples who are ignored by policies and legislation meant to improve the conditions too many of our people face. A lack of programs and services for urban Indigenous Peoples is a pressing issue, but without a seat at the reconciliation table our issues will remain unresolved.

"This illusion of inclusion has to stop," says CAP National Vice-Chief Kim Beaudin. "Since day one, this government has shared many kind words and made symbolic gestures, but their real sentiment can be found in their actions – and exclusion seems to be a policy in their reconciliation plan."

CAP is calling on MP's to choose inclusion over exclusion and ensure all voices are a part of reconciliation.

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The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is the national voice representing the interests of Métis, status and non-status Indians, and Southern Inuit Indigenous People living off-reserve. Today, over 80% of Indigenous people live off-reserve.