



Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement MYTH BUSTERS

Here are FACTS addressing common misconceptions about the proposed Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement.

1. MYTH: The Agreement will give Chiefs more power and money which won't benefit citizens or communities.

FACT: Chiefs will be accountable to the citizens of their First Nations. Their citizens will also help decide how the money is to be utilized. First Nation governments will operate according to their constitutions which are developed and ratified by the people.

2. MYTH: The Agreement doesn't do anything the existing Indian Act or current legislation doesn't do.

FACT: The proposed *Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement* provides an unprecedented level of funding and autonomy that no Canadian legislation does within the four areas of governance jurisdiction; namely, leadership selection, citizenship, language and culture, and operations and management.

3. MYTH: The Union of Ontario Indians is going to become the government.

FACT: The First Nations that ratify the Agreement will form the collective Anishinabek Nation Government. The participating First Nations will have complete control of all of the funding. The Union of Ontario Indians will remain the secretariat for its member Anishinabek First Nations.

4. MYTH: The Agreement doesn't do anything for Anishinabek language and culture that isn't already happening.

FACT: The Agreement will provide stable funding to strengthen and promote languages and culture and recognize the jurisdiction to develop laws and policies. The inclusion of law-making authority for languages and culture reflect the highest priority stated by Anishinabek people during the extensive consultation over the past 25 years.

5. MYTH: The Anishinabek Nation hasn't properly informed voters.

FACT: The communications efforts have been lengthy and extensive. There have been numerous information sessions in First Nations, urban centres, etc. First Nation Communications Coordinators, specifically hired to inform and engage community members, have been hired in most First Nations, to provide a wide range of information. In the last year alone, experts of the agreement have spoken directly to hundreds of Anishinabek First Nation members explaining the agreement's process and benefits. Agreement information is free and available to members through their First Nation.

6. MYTH: Only the plain language version of the proposed Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement is available.

FACT: The Agreement was not complete until August 2019 after its official initialling by the Anishinabek Nation and Canada. The final document is available upon request to Anishinabek First Nation members.

7. MYTH: The proposed Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement will damage sovereignty and diminish inherent and treaty rights.

FACT: Anishinabek negotiators were extremely cautious ensuring sovereignty, inherent rights, and Aboriginal rights, treaty rights are not affected in any way by the Agreement. The Agreement is about getting out of the *Indian Act* in four specific sections, including leadership selection, citizenship, culture and language, and management and operations.

8. MYTH: A change in Canadian government could cancel the Agreement and First Nations will be worse off than before.

FACT: Once ratified, the Agreement will become federal law, making it highly unlikely that future governments will revoke or alter it.

9. MYTH: After five years, the Agreement ends and First Nations will be left without further funding.

FACT: The Governance Agreement is permanent. The fiscal offer for governance funding will be renegotiated every five years. Until a new fiscal deal is reached, the previous deal will remain in force with increases such as the cost of living. The funding is permanent.

10. MYTH: It's too good to be true. There must be a catch.

FACT: There is no catch. The proposed *Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement* is the result of 25 years of hard work mandated by Anishinabek First Nations Chiefs through Grand Council resolution in 1995. It's also a recognition by Canada that it needs to get out of regulating First Nations. The only catch is First Nations will be responsible for enacting laws in four areas: leadership selection, citizenship culture and language, and management and operations.

11. MYTH: New citizenship laws will mean I will lose my Indian Status.

FACT: All Indian Status people will keep their Indian Status. The Agreement gives participating First Nations the authority to create their own citizenship laws. They will negotiate using their own citizen lists in the future. This Agreement does not grant Indian Status.

12. MYTH: OSR (Own Source Revenue) will claw back some of the funding that is earmarked for First Nations.

FACT: OSR is in a moratorium. Some Anishinabek First Nations are currently using OSR to cover shortages in funding. Once ratified, the proposed *Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement* will enable communities to use OSR to cover other costs.