
News Release Communiqué

2-02521

FIRST NATIONS FISCAL AND STATISTICAL MANAGEMENT ACT INTRODUCED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

OTTAWA, ONTARIO (November 2, 2004) – The proposed *First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act* was introduced in the House of Commons today by the Honourable Andy Scott, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians. This legislation was initially introduced in December 2002 and had reached Third Reading when Parliament was dissolved in May of 2004.

This First Nations-led initiative will establish, through legislation, four institutions designed to provide First Nations with the practical tools available to other governments for modern fiscal management. The legislation is designed to allow First Nations that choose to use its services, to participate more actively in the Canadian economy and promote private investment while meeting local infrastructure needs. The initiative is the result of the cooperation of several leading First Nation organizations and federal government departments.

Mr. C.T. (Manny) Jules, spokesperson for the First Nations fiscal institutions initiative, applauded the Government of Canada’s decision to proceed with the legislation.

“This legislation is the bedrock on which you can break the dependency cycle. The creation of the First Nations Tax Commission, First Nations Finance Authority, First Nations Financial Management Board and First Nations Statistical Institute will provide the information, certainty, a regulatory framework, confidence and infrastructure required to attract investment to First Nation lands.”

“This legislation will offer First Nations who choose to use its provisions access to the tools to support economic development and growth,” Said Minister Scott. “This First Nations-led initiative is an excellent example of working together to bring about real improvement to the quality of life of first Nation people.”

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This legislation will provide First Nations with the access to capital markets available to other governments. It will further strengthen the First Nation real property tax system and provide greater representation for taxpayers. It will encourage the use of appropriate financial standards and improve financial management. Finally, it will assist in developing statistical management capacity while encouraging First Nation participation in national data collection activities.

A hallmark of the Bill is its optional nature which recognizes that First Nations are diverse. This legislation will only apply to those First Nations who have chosen to access the full range of services offered by the institutions. Those First Nations who choose not to participate, will still have the opportunity to obtain the advisory services offered by the institutions in the areas of property taxation and financial and statistical management. Solid capacities in these areas are important assets in the transition to self-government.

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