
Assembly of First Nations

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January 30, 2025

Via email: ssmith@airberlis.com

Aird Berlis
Attention: Scott Smith
885 West Georgia Street, Suite 1400
Vancouver, Canada V6C 3E8

Dear Mr. Smith:

Re: Your Request to Canada to discuss Long-Term Reform Negotiations

I write in reply to your letter of January 22, 2025, to Paul Vickery of Justice Canada regarding long-term reform (LTR) of the FNCFS Program and Jordan's Principle.

As Chief Executive Officer of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), under the AFN Finance Policy, I am the only person within the organization that has authority to approve contracts for services. The AFN is concerned with your inference that you have been instructed to act on behalf of the AFN on negotiations, which are implicitly tied to proceedings of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) to which the AFN is a party, being Court File No. T- 1340/7008. Neither your firm nor Mr. Scott Smith has been retained by the AFN to act on our behalf.

Additionally, with respect to your representation of the National Children's Chiefs Commission (NCCC), your firm appears to be in a direct conflict of interest, having been engaged by Dr. Cindy Blackstock and Mary Teegee to pursue alleged claims of defamation against both the National Chief, as well as the AFN, respectively. The AFN does not waive this conflict. To seek to act in any capacity for the AFN, whether through the NCCC or otherwise, while pursuing potential litigation against the organization and the National Chief is inappropriate.

We request that you correct the record with Justice Canada in that you are not counsel for the AFN, nor do you represent that AFN in any capacity.

Yours very truly,

Andrew Bisson
Chief Executive Officer
Assembly of First Nations

cc AFN Executive Committee