



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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First Nations Chiefs of Police Respond to Federal Announcement To Renew Commitment to First Nations Policing Program

Ottawa, Ontario – On March 4, 2013, Public Safety Minister Vic Toews announced that the Federal Government will maintain funding for policing agreements with First Nation and Inuit communities under the First Nations Policing Program (FNPP) for the next five years. The First Nations Chiefs of Police Association (FNCPA) welcomes this announcement and views it as a ‘starting point’ towards addressing unique and chronic issues facing aboriginal policing.

The FNCPA are calling on federal and provincial governments to engage in discussions targeted towards meaningful steps to address the following issues:

- While committing to maintain previous levels of funding for the next five years is a positive step, it does not address the chronic levels of underfunding provided to law enforcement serving First Nations and Inuit communities. Despite limited resources our police services continue to provide their communities with above average results. Continued limitations on adequate funding could compromise the level of service provided in the future
- The FNPP was set to expire on March 31, 2013. On March 4, 2013 we learned that this funding would be maintained. Prior to this announcement, those providing police services to aboriginal communities were faced with tremendous uncertainty in terms of planning and forecasting the delivery of services. Through greater on-going collaboration, this uncertainty would have been mitigated.
- Governments have failed to engage in direct, meaningful consultation and we call on the

federal government to provide a forum to discuss issues, many which have already tabled but have yet to receive responses. This should include the FNCPA, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and representative Canadian police leaders.

- The Aboriginal Policing Directorate (APD) of Public Safety Canada has completed a “Comprehensive Review of First Nations Policing.” This was submitted to Cabinet in the 2009/10 Parliamentary Session. This study has yet to be released.
- There needs to be a recognition by governments that First Nations policing are an ‘essential service’ and not a ‘program.’ In his March 4, 2013 statement, Minister Toews mentions that the FNPP supports “professional, dedicated and culturally-responsive policing services to First Nation and Inuit communities.” As such, wages, pension and benefits parity must be developed for Self-Administered First Nations Policing Services/First Nations Officers which is comparable to all police services/agencies across Canada.
- On March 7, 2013, the Correctional Investigator of Canada released the following findings:
 - Despite making up only 4 per cent of the general Canadian population, aboriginals make up 23 per cent of the prison population.
 - Only modest progress has been made in providing aboriginals with alternative forms of justice such as healing lodges and healing circles.
 - Re-offender rates for aboriginals are much higher than for non-aboriginals

We need a concerted effort with federal / provincial governments to reverse these trends and provide long-term solutions. The FNCPA supports the development of innovative solutions such as the Community Mobilization / Early Intervention program developed by the Prince Albert Police Service. This program has been adopted by many police services throughout Canada and is a potential model to be used in First Nations and Inuit communities.

The federal government has stated “they will continue to work with its partners to explore ways to provide the most cost-effective and sustainable policing options.” The FNCPA, the AFN and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) Aboriginal Policing Committee are requesting the opportunity to meet with Minister Toews and his provincial counterparts in a much needed discussion to address these issues.

Chief John Syrette, President - FNCPA (Anishinebek Police Service – Ontario)

The FNCPA exists to serve First Nation police services and First Nation territories across Canada by facilitating the highest level of professionalism and accountability in their police services, all in a manner that reflects the unique cultures, constitutional status, social circumstances, traditions and aspirations of First Nations.

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