

## MEDIA RELEASE AND PUBLIC LETTER FROM ELSIPOGTOG FIRST NATION

### **RE: Elsipogtog First Nation congratulates Mi'kmaq communities on important step forward to obtain formal recognition of Mi'kmaq Aboriginal title**

*Elsipogtog First Nation – February 17, 2023* - This week, eight Mi'kmaq communities in New Brunswick represented by Mi'gmawe'l Tplu'taqnn Inc. (MTI), took a significant step towards the recognition and implementation of Aboriginal title for the Mi'kmaq Nation in New Brunswick. MTI released a map identifying the Mi'kmaq Nation's title lands of *Mi'kma'ki* in New Brunswick, over which, collectively, the Mi'kmaq Nation holds decision-making authority and governance rights.

As a community of the Mi'kmaq Nation, Elsipogtog supports, and congratulates MTI on MTI's important efforts to ensure the Government of New Brunswick recognizes the inherent and protected rights of the Mi'kmaq Nation across *Mi'kma'ki*.

The Mi'kmaq Nation's title lands of *Mi'kma'ki* are divided into seven geographic districts. In 2016, Elsipogtog filed an Aboriginal Title claim on behalf of the Mi'kmaq Nation to the district of Sikniktuk. MTI's map of *Mi'kma'ki* includes all Mi'kmaq districts in New Brunswick. Elsipogtog looks forward to working with MTI to ensure the Mi'kmaq Nation's title lands and rights across the districts in *Mi'kma'ki*, including our right to self determination, are respected and protected for future generations.

"For too long, the Province has failed to meaningfully and respectfully engage with the Mi'kmaq Nation, all while taking decisions to degrade Mi'kmaq lands," states Chief Arren Sock of Elsipogtog First Nation. "Together, the Mi'kmaq Nation is telling the Province we will not accept this any longer. It's time to come to the table and recognize our rights across *Mi'kma'ki*."

Kopit Lodge spokesperson Kenneth Francis sees MTI's actions and the map of the Mi'kmaq Nation's title lands in New Brunswick as a necessary step to protect the Mi'kmaq Nation's inherent rights across *Mi'kma'ki*, and consistent with the Crown's solemn promises under the Peace and Friendship Treaties. "The communities of the Mi'kmaq Nation, including MTI and Elsipogtog, have never surrendered Mi'kmaq title. The Peace and Friendship Treaties signed by our ancestors set out mutual promises with the Crown to guide our ongoing relationship on our lands and ensure peace. This relationship recognizes our continued right to make decisions over our title lands." Francis continues, "the Mi'kmaq Nation has worked together for thousands of years to govern and protect our lands across *Mi'kma'ki*, and we will continue to do so."

Elsipogtog First Nation and its members stand by MTI and will work with MTI to ensure the Province begins meaningful discussions recognizing our inherent Mi'kmaq title and rights.

#### **Please direct inquiries to:**

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