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March 2, 2009

Ms. Alice Jeffery
Box 229
Hazelton, B.C.
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Attention: Alice Jeffrey, Cliff Sampare, Larry Skulsh and George Sampare

Dear Singiigyet,

We are following up on our meeting of February 27, 2009 held at Gitanmaax hall regarding certain hereditary chief's request for Gitanmaax Band to relinquish Gitanmaax Reserve, 06759 Kisgegas to them. We also wish to clear up misconceptions and misinformation on the meeting as is apparent in the Gitksan Treaty Office's news release of March 3, 2009, published in the Interior News.

We first place the February 27th meeting in context. Gitanmaax Band Council was invited to attend a meeting with six chiefs regarding Kisgegas. On February 27, 2009, Gitanmaax Band Council arrived to a full hall of participants who were invited to attend by Alice Jeffrey and/or others. The Band Council extended the courtesy to the hereditary chiefs to proceed with the meeting, despite their having no knowledge that the apparent intent of the hereditary chiefs and/or others was to turn the proposed private meeting into a public forum. Obviously, had we been so notified, we would have made arrangements for Gitanmaax band members to also be present and express their views. Regardless of the miscommunication, we agreed to hear from the Hereditary Chiefs and listen to their views of Gitanmaax Reserve 06759, Kisgegas.

During the course of the meeting we made the following commitments:

1. We will meet Gitsegas chiefs on March 13th for another information sharing meeting.
2. Gitanmaax Band Council will meet on April 3, 2009, to commence in-camera deliberation on information arising from the March 13th meeting.
3. Gitanmaax Band will commence archival research on Kisgegas to ensure that Council has all necessary information upon which to base their deliberations that may impact Gitanmaax Band members.

Contrary to Gitxsan Treaty Office's communication release suggesting that we will be signing over Kisgegas on March 13th; at no time did we commit to signing any document to this effect. In fact, the Indian Act specifically prevents us from taking any action to transfer rights to any of our reserves without the express consent of the majority of Gitanmaax Band members by way of Referendum. Further, should Band Council allow use by non-band members without complying with rigorous processes set out in the Indian Act and its Regulations, we will be breaching our fiduciary duty to Gitanmaax members. We cannot, and will not, be negligent in our duties in this regard. It is also important to recognize that should Gitanmaax Band Council fail to carry out our duty to protect our reserves then Canada has a duty to step in and protect the rights of our band members.

For your information, we will also be consulting with Gitanmaax band members on Kisgegas. As part of this planning process, we will be considering alternative uses for Kisgegas, including examining the feasibility of its use for residential or other purposes, or alternately, leaving it in its natural state. However, in considering these alternatives, we must also take into account our existing community planning, infrastructure works, and resulting budgetary constraints.

We recognize that it is possible that those Gitxsan who wish to reside on Kisgegas reserve may wish to transfer from their respective bands into Gitanmaax. We also recognize that Gitanmaax band members may wish to transfer and have property rights in other Gitxsan bands. We are open to these discussions with all Kisgegas Simgiigyet, as well as our band members.

In closing, we reiterate our commitment to ongoing discussions. With respect to the participants at our next meeting, we note that although many other simgiigyet were invited, we understand that not all Kisgegas chiefs were invited. Further, a number of hereditary chiefs who have no traditional authority to speak about Kisgegas, spoke strongly in favour of relinquishment. Please identify the appropriate hereditary chiefs who will be the contact persons for purpose of these discussions.

In closing, the Gitxsan Treaty office's news release is in error and it is unfortunate that this misconception will cause unnecessary public confusion and/or expectation. We trust this clarifies Gitanmaax Band Council's position.

Sincerely,



Chief Marjorie McRae
Gitanmaax Band Council

Cc: Gitxsan Treaty Office