



# The United Church of Canada Saskatchewan Conference

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May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013

The Honorable June Draude, Minister of Social Services  
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan  
303 - 2405 Legislative Drive  
Regina, Saskatchewan  
S4S 0B3

Dear Ms. Draude:

Re: First Nations Land Claims Income as Exempt Income for People  
on Social Assistance or on Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability

The United Church of Canada is Saskatchewan's second largest religious denomination with over 40,000 members and many thousand more adherents in 278 churches which serve all over Saskatchewan. In 2007, 19.5% of the population claimed United Church affiliation. Saskatchewan Conference is one presence of The United Church of Canada within the Province of Saskatchewan.

At a recent meeting of the Executive of Saskatchewan Conference, a proposal was passed requesting that the Government of Saskatchewan make First Nations Land Claims fully exempt as income for people on Social Assistance or on Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability.

Such land claim settlements are intended to compensate for an historical grievance. For people who are low-income or disabled, the benefit is lost if it is deemed to be income for persons in receipt of income security. Only \$1,500 of the land claims settlement payments are exempted as income for those in receipt of benefits through the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan (SAP) or Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) programs. This is unjust as is any level of government being the prime beneficiary of a compensation payment to an individual

We are very supportive of the \$100,000 inheritance exemption for householders on the SAID program. However, this exemption is dependent on the good fortune of being from a family that can transfer wealth. Systemic barriers including the loss of land has prevented this from being the reality for many First Nations persons. Land claim settlement exemptions should at least be on par with inheritance exemptions.



**Mission and Service Fund**

It is our opinion that by not having the exemption, people who are already suffering financially due to the historic actions of our government and society are being further penalized by the government. This is happening at the same time that the government has promised to address and settle those historic wrongs.

We also note that high levels of exemption for compensation for historical grievance have been provided for the Japanese Canadian Redress, pay equity settlements and residential school claims. Land claim settlements relate to the ultimate historic grievance in Canadian history.

Thank you for your attention to this request and for the urgent need for just treatment for recipients of First Nations Land Claims. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the above feel free to contact me at 306-757-6444.

In Peace,



Darrell Reine, Minister  
President, Saskatchewan Conference  
BD/  
By email only – [jdraude@mla.legassembly.sk.ca](mailto:jdraude@mla.legassembly.sk.ca)

cc: Rev. Bill Doyle, Executive Secretary of Saskatchewan Conference  
Ms. Danielle Chartier (by email only - [dchartier@mla.legassembly.sk.ca](mailto:dchartier@mla.legassembly.sk.ca))  
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