



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BLACKFOOT CONFEDERACY CHIEFS DENOUNCE BILL 54 AND AFFIRM BLACKFOOT TREATY SOVEREIGNTY

Mohkinstsis (Calgary, AB), Blackfoot Territory - May 1, 2025 – We, the Chiefs of the Blackfoot Confederacy Nations—Siksika, Kainai, Piikani, and Aamskapi Piikani—formally reject Alberta’s Bill 54, the Citizen-led Referendum Act. This proposed legislation threatens the constitutional and legal order by disregarding the Nation-to-Crown agreements that define our relationship with the state. It undermines the authority of the Blackfoot Treaty, signed in 1877 at Blackfoot Crossing, which predates Alberta’s entry into Confederation by nearly three decades.

The Blackfoot Treaty, like Treaties 6 (1876) and 8 (1899), was not a land surrender. It was a framework for peaceful coexistence and shared use of territory. These agreements, entered into in good faith by our ancestors, established a relationship based on mutual obligation and respect. They remain active, living instruments within Canada’s constitutional architecture.

Understanding the original intent and spirit of these treaties is essential to any contemporary relationship between Indigenous Nations and the Crown. Educational efforts must prioritize the differing worldviews at the time of treaty-making, and reinforce that these covenants were never intended to be static. Alberta must commit to treaty education as a foundational part of reconciliation and governance. That need is more urgent than ever.

As Siksikaitsitapi, our inherent sovereignty precedes and transcends provincial boundaries. Our jurisdiction extends across what is now called Alberta and Montana—lands divided without our consent. The Lamé Bull Treaty of 1855, along with the long-standing understanding of the Medicine Line, illustrates the recognition of Blackfoot sovereignty on both sides of this imposed border. No provincial initiative can redefine or erase our Nationhood.

Bill 54, by proposing a process for provincial referendums on constitutional matters—including potential separation—poses a direct challenge to existing treaty obligations and constitutional law. Treaty rights are not subject to popular vote, and cannot be reinterpreted or overridden by provincial legislation. We unequivocally reject any legislative mechanism that attempts to do so.



We call on you, Premier Smith, to withdraw Bill 54 and to renounce all rhetoric that seeks to destabilize the foundational legal agreements upon which this province rests. This bill reflects a serious miscalculation and a failure to respect the historical and legal context that governs Alberta's existence.

Today, the Blackfoot Confederacy governs over 25,000 members in Alberta, holds stewardship over more than 2,531.14 square kilometers of land in southern Alberta, and exercises jurisdiction over approximately 80% of southern Alberta within Blackfoot territory. These responsibilities are not symbolic—they are exercised daily in accordance with our laws and values, inherited through generations.

The Blackfoot Treaty is not a document of the past. It is a sacred, enduring commitment meant to guide relationships "as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the rivers flow." As Siksikaitsitapi, we will continue to uphold our treaty responsibilities and expect the Province of Alberta to do the same.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to Chief Ouray Crowfoot.

**NIOKSSKAISTAMIK
Chief Ouray Crowfoot,
Siksika Nation**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to Chief Travis Plaited Hair.

**AAKAAYAAMIHSTINIMA
Chief Travis Plaited Hair,
Kainai-Blood Tribe**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to Chief Troy Knowlton.

**KIYAYOTOOKANN
Chief Troy Knowlton,
Piikani Nation**