



BLACKFOOT CONFEDERACY CHIEFS SEEK EXPLANATION FOR ALBERTA'S PAUSE OF PROTOCOL AGREEMENT WORK UNTIL AFTER OCTOBER 19 REFERENDUM

MOHKINSTSIS, AB | September 10, 2026 - The Chiefs of Blackfoot Confederacy are seeking a clear written explanation from the Government of Alberta regarding the pause in meetings, communication and work under the Government of Alberta-Blackfoot Confederacy Protocol Agreement until after the October 19, 2026 provincial referendum.

The Protocol Agreement was established in 2017 as a government-to-government framework between Blackfoot Confederacy and the Government of Alberta to advance matters of mutual benefit. Over the years, the agreement has developed into an active structure involving eleven tables addressing areas including economic development and employment, culture, language and education, social matters, environment and lands, political and legal matters, UNDRIP and Truth and Reconciliation, housing and policing.

The Chiefs state that Alberta's pause is holding up work already underway between the two governments. Workplans have been established, Terms of Reference have been developed, technicians have been engaged and initiatives have been progressing through the established tables.

During the summer of 2026, scheduled meetings between Blackfoot Confederacy and Alberta ministries were cancelled and communication was discontinued. Following efforts to obtain clarification, Blackfoot Confederacy was advised that direction had been provided through the Ministry of Indigenous Relations for provincial ministries to pause further communication and development under the Protocol Agreement until after the October 19 referendum.

The Chiefs are also questioning the timing of Alberta's pause given the province's current fiscal position. Alberta's first-quarter fiscal update projects a \$2-billion surplus for 2026-27. The Chiefs say the continued pause raises questions about why established commitments and initiatives under the Protocol Agreement cannot proceed.

Blackfoot Confederacy was not consulted on the decision to pause the work and has not received a clear explanation for it. The Chiefs are seeking a written response from Premier Danielle Smith and Indigenous Relations Minister Rajan Sawhney explaining the reason for the pause, who authorized the direction to provincial ministries, what work is affected and when engagement under the Protocol Agreement will resume.

The Chiefs are calling for transparency from the Government of Alberta and expect a direct written response regarding the pause and the continued operation of the Protocol Agreement.



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