

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NUNATUKAVUT COMMUNITY COUNCIL APPLAUDS SUPREME COURT DECISION ON INDIGENOUS CHILD WELFARE LAW

HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY, LABRADOR, February 14, 2024 – The NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC) celebrates the Supreme Court of Canada’s recent decision in the reference case regarding Bill C-92, An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children Youth and Families (the “Act”).

After being granted approval to intervene in the hearing before the Supreme Court of Canada, NCC made written and oral submissions before the Court to ensure the unique circumstances and perspective of NCC as an Inuit governing body, and of NunatuKavut Inuit as a people, were considered. In particular, NCC outlined how the Act appropriately safeguards equality by protecting access to minimum standards for Indigenous child and family welfare groups like NCC, who experience jurisdictional uncertainty and harm associated with lack of access to funding and programming.

The Act is vital in helping to protect the health, security and well-being of NunatuKavut Inuit children, families, and communities. NCC applauds the Supreme Court of Canada’s [ruling](#) that the entirety of the Act is constitutionally valid.

Quick Facts

- NCC is the representative governing body for approximately 6,000 Inuit who reside primarily in south and central Labrador.
- NunatuKavut means “Our Ancient Land” in Inuttitut and is the traditional territory of the Inuit who belong to this territory.
- In July 2018, NCC entered into talks with the Government of Canada on the Recognition of its Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination (RIRSD). In September 2019, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed.
- An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families—formerly known as Bill C-92, now the “Act” for short—received Royal Assent on June 21, 2019. The Act came into effect on January 1, 2020 and sets very important national standards for Indigenous child and family welfare.
- The Act affirms that Indigenous communities have an inherent right to self-government, including jurisdiction over child and family services, and, in doing so, are subject to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
- The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the Act as a whole is constitutionally valid, and in doing so, confirmed Parliament’s affirmation that section 35 of the Constitution includes the Indigenous right to self-government in relation to child and family welfare. It also binds the Federal Crown to act in accordance with this position.

Quote

“We are pleased to have had the opportunity to bring the Supreme Court of Canada’s attention to NunatuKavut Inuit needs and realities when deciding this landmark case. We are heartened to know that the national standards established by the Act continue to apply, and that the Government of Canada’s affirmation of the Indigenous right to self-govern in relation to our children, youth and families has been upheld. NCC has long-operated on this fundamental legal right – our inherent to self-government already drives our policies respecting membership, governance, and management of our traditional lands, as well as our relationship with colonial governments. We are hopeful that the Act will achieve the reconciliatory purposes it sets out to reach, and foster a renewed nation-to-nation relationship, as we continue to ensure the dignity, safety, and well-being of NunatuKavut Inuit are upheld.”

-- NCC President Todd Russell

Associated Links

- To read NCC’s news release regarding its arguments before the Supreme Court of Canada, please visit: <https://nunatukavut.ca/news-media/news-releases/>
- To read Bill C-92, Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children, Youth, and Families, please visit <https://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/bill/C-92/royal-assent>
- Further information on NCC can be found at www.nunatukavut.ca. Please also join in the conversation at Facebook.com/nunatukavut, Twitter @nunatukavut, Instagram @nunatukavutinuit and YouTube by searching NunatuKavut.

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