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Without stable funding, KIDO (KI Family Law) Faces an Uncertain Future

Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) Calls the Two-Year Fiscal Relationship Agreement Inadequate, Demanding Respect for KI Children, Youth and Families and the Constitutional Rights Impacted

November 19th, 2025

Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI)—a Treaty #9 Independent Nation in northwestern Ontario—warns that unstable federal funding threatens to dismantle Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug Dibenjikewin Onaakonikewin (KIDO) (KI Family Law) and undermine hard-won Indigenous self-government, as a sub-set of self-determination. After ten months of uncertainty, the government officials on Tuesday November 18, 2025, informed KIDO, the body delegated by KI to implement KIDO (KI Family Law), that it will only extend the fiscal agreement by two years. Without long-term investment, KI's future for children, youth, and families is uncertain.

The KI Homelands have existed since time immemorial. KI was granted Miniikozowin, the inherent right, the right to respect all forms of life and most importantly, to protect awaashishag (children), oshkaadizag (youth), and dibenjikewinan (families). Today, KI Homelands, is within Treaty #9, signed in 1905, and subsequently Treaty #9 Adhesion of July 1929 located in northwestern Ontario. KI is approximately 600 kilometres north of Thunder Bay, Ontario.

KIDO delivers culturally rooted programs for KI child, youth, and families—empowering KI to lead healing, support, and child wellness on our own terms, as an exercise of our constitutionally recognized inherent right, as envisioned in the federal “Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families” (the “Act”) and grounded in Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

Despite a binding trilateral Coordination Agreement of 2023 and repeated outreach, KIDO's efforts to negotiate a four-year extension of its Fiscal Relationship Agreement ("FRA") was met with a two-year extension – falling short of true reconciliation.

Funding instability takes away from the real work of delivering child, youth and family services. As well, it deters from staff recruitment, erodes job security and hinders long term planning. KIDO's vision for generational wellness cannot be realized through year-to-year funding.

The KIDO (KI Family Law) stands as one of Canada's clearest examples of Indigenous self-determination and the transformative power of investing in Indigenous peoples and communities. By shifting away from colonial models and putting culture, language, and Elder wisdom at the heart of family services. KI has restored dignity and opportunity to countless children and families since it launched on April 1, 2023.

The Liberal government's failure to respect the Act—crafted in the spirit of Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982—contradicts its promises. Indigenous rights to care for our children, youth, and families must be honoured, not with words, but with long-term, stable funding. Canada's failure to provide such long term and stable support not only call into question the Crown's honour, but also its often-stated claims to be pursuing reconciliation and healing with Indigenous Peoples. KI believes true reconciliation requires meaningful actions not hollow words spoken when politically convenient.

Leadership Quotes

“Our children, our law, our future—this is what’s at stake,” said Chief Donny Morris. “We have proven that an Indigenous-led, community-driven approach changes lives. Federal funding instability now threatens to extinguish this beacon of hope and undermine the very foundation of our agreement with Canada. Canada has pulled the rug from under us”.

KIDO Director MaryEllen Thomas adds:

“We urge leaders to listen to our success stories, to witness the power of Indigenous law enacted by Indigenous people, and to recognize that reconciliation requires not just words but real investment. Together, we can ensure that what we have built is never dismantled—because reconciliation is not something you sever.”

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For further comment please contact:

James Cutfeet

Senior Government Relations Representative

807.631.8678