

Yukon First Nations seek more time to review child act ^[1]

North, CBC News

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EXCERPTS

First Nations leaders want the Yukon government to hold off on tabling a new child and family services act while they review the proposed legislation.

Leaders passed a resolution requesting the delay Wednesday at the Council of Yukon First Nations leadership meeting in Whitehorse.

The act is expected to be tabled during the spring session of the Yukon legislature. The leaders want to see that pushed back by at least four or five months.

"We need to have more time to talk to other First Nations as to what the future of this legislation means for us," said Ta'an Kwach'an Chief Ruth Massey, who chaired Wednesday's meeting.

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First Nations have long raised concerns with the existing Children's Act, as well as the disproportionately high number of aboriginal children in care.

A draft of the proposed act, details of which were leaked to the media last month, calls for more First Nations involvement in child and family service planning and delivery.

The draft act also calls for mandatory reporting of abuse against children, as well as a clear intention to place children in care with extended family and within their First Nation when possible.

Government officials have been touring the Yukon for the past month, consulting with various First Nations and select special-interest groups on the draft act. That is in addition to meetings First Nation leaders have had with government over the past year about the legislation.

Still, Chief Eric Morris of the Teslin Tlingit Council said it can be difficult to accommodate the government's consultation schedule.

"What's required is ensuring that recommendations that are being made by the First Nations communities are implemented," he said.

The resolution passed at Wednesday's CYFN meeting calls for a symposium to accommodate roundtable discussions about the proposed act, as well as setting a new timeline for introducing the legislation.

Leaders also requested that First Nation officials be allowed to work with the Yukon government to review the consultations on the act and develop draft guidelines for any revisions to be made.

- reprinted by the CBC News

Region: Yukon Territory ^[2]

Tags: aboriginal ^[3]

legislation and regulation ^[4]

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