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DENE NATION CONCERNED OVER IMPACTS FROM TARRIFFS ON CANADIAN GOODS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE- [YELLOWKNIFE, DENENDEH – February 4, 2025] The Dene Nation stands united in its strong opposition to the recent announcement of a 25% tariff imposed by the United States on Canadian goods. This unilateral decision not only threatens the economic stability of Dene communities but aggravates existing disparities faced by First Nations throughout Canada.

The imposition of these tariffs will have profound economic implications for Indigenous businesses and communities in the Northwest Territories. Many of our enterprises, which are already navigating significant challenges, will face increased costs and reduced market access. This economic strain threatens to deepen the socio-economic disparities that our communities have long struggled to overcome.

Beyond the economic realm, these tariffs pose cultural and societal challenges. The interconnectedness of our economies means that any disruption can ripple through our communities, affecting not just livelihoods but also cultural practices and social cohesion. The preservation of our cultural heritage is intimately linked to our economic well-being, and any threat to one is a threat to the other.

Dene National Chief George Mackenzie stated, “I emphasize that our people must take a leading role in any discussions regarding trade policy and its impact on our communities. The economic well-being of the Dene is intricately linked to the broader Canadian economy. Yet, our voices have often been sidelined in conversations crucial to our future.”

It is imperative that governments on both sides of the border recognize the unique rights, perspectives, and needs of the Dene. Any economic policy affecting our communities must be developed in consultation and cooperation with First Nations, ensuring that we are not only participants but leaders.

In response to these tariffs, the Dene Nation calls on the Canadian government to advocate vigorously against these measures and to prioritize meaningful engagement with Indigenous leaders in developing strategies to mitigate their impacts. We urge Canada's Ministers to include First Nations leadership in their ongoing strategic discussions regarding border issues, Arctic sovereignty, and Canada's response to these shortsighted tariffs.

Furthermore, the Dene Nation encourages a collaborative approach to address broader issues, including trade equity, sustainable economic development, and mutual respect for Indigenous rights. We encourage businesses and residents to buy Canadian products and support local businesses. We also support strategic infrastructure projects and investments that contribute to economic diversification and strengthen supply chains.

The Dene have occupied these lands far before Canada or the United States existed, and we will remain strong and united in the face of adversity and uncertainty. We stand committed to working alongside our allies and the Canadian government to advocate for fair trade practices that respect Dene sovereignty and support vibrant, sustainable communities.

Our resilience and unity are our strengths. We are committed to ensuring that our communities not only survive but thrive, and that our children inherit a future where their rights and opportunities are respected and increased. Together, we will navigate these challenges and emerge stronger, with a renewed commitment to sustainable development and fair trade practices.



Dene National Chief George Mackenzie

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