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Statement: Canada Reaffirms Commitment to Maa-Nulth Final Agreement

OTTAWA, ONTARIO--(Marketwire - June 19, 2009) - The following statement was released by the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Metis and Non-Status Indians:

"Yesterday the Government of Canada completed the final Parliamentary step to ratify the Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement. In a true show of partnership and a shared common goal, this legislation successfully passed through Parliament in four days. Bill C-41, introduced in the House of Commons on June 15 and passed by the Senate on June 18, received Royal Assent yesterday.

This historic Agreement, negotiated under the British Columbia Treaty Process, signals the beginning of a new era for the Maa-nulth First Nations, as we continue our shared path of a renewed relationship between Canada, the Province of British Columbia, and most importantly, the Maa-nulth people. Modern treaties, like this one, not only foster a stronger relationship with First Nation people, but also help create a stable and positive economic climate for investment and growth.

This legislation and the Maa-nulth Final Agreement will provide certainty, and for the Maa-nulth First Nations in particular, rights regarding self-government and the ownership and management of lands and resources. Certainty creates the foundation for a renewed relationship with Canada and an improved quality of life for the Maa-nulth First Nations.

When meeting with the Maa-nulth chiefs and federal negotiators earlier this week, all spoke of hope for the future, pride in reaching a formidable goal, and respect for the history that brought us all to this point. Today is an opportunity for all involved to celebrate that optimism, savour the satisfaction of a job well-done and look forward to a stronger relationship as we move forward together."

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