

## Senate Standing Committee on Agriculture and Forestry

April 18, 2024

### The growing issue of wildfires in Canada and the consequential effects that wildfires have on forestry and agriculture industries throughout the country

#### Transcript of Question:

**Senator Jaffer:** Thank you to all of you for being here, especially you, Mr. Moxon. It's so early in the morning. That's a dilemma for all of us living in the West or in the North; it's always Ottawa time, so thank you.

I think my questions are for you, Ms. Hadden-Jokiel. If not, then they are for Mr. Walsh. Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada's First Nation Adapt program supports First Nations communities in responding to the impacts of climate change with the focus on wildfires, among other priorities. What types of support did the program offer to Indigenous communities affected by wildfires in 2023?

**Mr. Walsh:** That's a really good question. I think the program provided indirect support but nothing during the emergency. We can come back, and I'll follow up on that.

**Senator Jaffer:** Where were the gaps? You can follow up if you don't know that. What more could have been done to support Indigenous communities? There is always more to do, so I'm not trying to be critical, but what were the gaps?

#### Answer:

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada's First Nation Adapt (FNA) program supports First Nations South of 60 to undertake community-based climate change adaptation projects. The program supports First Nations' self-determined priorities, including assessing and planning for wildfire, flooding, drought, coastal erosion, and sea level rise. First Nation Adapt redirects or co-funds wildfire projects with the Emergency Management Assistance Program, considering their capacity to support wildfire preparedness and prevention. The Emergency Management Assistance Program works with provincial and Indigenous partners to provide response and recovery support during and after a wildfire event.

Since 2016, First Nation Adapt has supported a total of 230 climate change adaptation projects. This was possible through an investment of more than \$61.7 million, including over \$6 million in funding to support wildfire and emergency preparedness. In 2023 specifically, the program funded one project (\$477,710) to support the Interlake Reserves Tribal Council in the second phase of an adaptation planning project. This included the development of a prescriptive burning adaptation

management plan with Kinonjeoshtegon First Nation, to complement the Emergency Management Assistance Program's FireSmart funding in the community. Some community projects include wildfire hazards in their more general climate change assessments and adaptation planning activities. The needs exceed available funding, considering the hundreds of communities who are disproportionately affected by multiple hazards which are exacerbated by the effects of climate change.

North of 60, CIRNAC's Climate Change Preparedness in the North program provides similar funding support to Indigenous and northern communities, including funding to assess, prepare for and prevent wildfire impacts. CIRNAC climate change programs do not provide response and recovery funding to communities during a wildfire event.

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#### Transcript of Question:

**Senator Simons:** Perhaps it's too amorphous a question, but I think — so that we do come back to the ambit of the Agriculture and Forestry Committee — if there is a way to give us a sense, even if it's not a number, but to maybe have a couple of examples of communities where this has been an economic industry that has been disrupted.

I wanted to ask, Ms. Hadden-Jokiel, you mentioned in your opening statement something about a new deal with Alberta, which perked up my ears, especially because Alberta's government is in the midst of passing legislation that says no provincial entity can apply for federal funds without the express permission of the province. Tell me, what is this initiative you have in Alberta, and how have you made that work in a jurisdiction where these issues are especially complex?

**Ms. Hadden-Jokiel:** Absolutely. Before I turn it to James Moxon for an overview of what we're doing in Alberta in terms of an all-hazard approach, Rory O'Connor had a comment around your first question regarding forestry.

As well, I will point out that we have a Strategic Partnerships Initiative program at Indigenous Services Canada, or ISC, which is really about facilitating horizontal collaboration, and they have shared with me three forest regeneration/reforestation-type projects that are eligible as part of that funding stream, so I'll try and get a little bit more information on the work through that initiative. It's not in my sector, but I'll commit to getting back to you in writing.

#### Answer:

- The Strategic Partnerships Initiative (SPI) provides a way for 22 federal partners to coordinate their efforts, reduce administrative burden and pool resources in support of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. It works to support Indigenous communities in large, complex, multi-year economic development opportunities across a variety of sectors in Canada. SPI's flexible terms and conditions provide our federal partners with a way to coordinate their efforts and reduce the administrative and reporting burden for recipients. This approach fills gaps in other funding programs that might create a barrier to Indigenous involvement in economic opportunities.

- From 2017 to present, SPI has funded three (3) initiatives which promote the economic opportunities in the forestry sector :
  - 2017-23 Northern and remote Forests Biomass Initiative (Natural Resources Canada)
    - With the assistance of Natural Resources Canadian Forest Service, this initiative has been supporting communities to identify economic opportunities, build capacity, develop plans for pursuing economic opportunities, and help strengthen the development of a northern forest industry for wood fuel.
    - (SPI funding: \$6,530,250)
  - 2018-2025 Forest Full Initiative (Indigenous Services Canada & Natural Resources Canada)
    - This initiative helps Indigenous communities increase and diversify their economy as well as increase their food and energy sovereignty across the province. The initiative also supports the creation and retention of well-paid jobs within the communities (machinery operators, silvicultural workers, engineers, technicians, laborers, etc.).
    - (SPI funding: \$8,506,750).
  - 2020-2023 Manitoba Indigenous Forestry Initiative (Natural Resources Canada & Indigenous Services Canada)
    - The Major Opportunities Manitoba Forestry Initiative (MOMFI) invested in forestry-based economic development opportunities throughout central Manitoba. These opportunities highlighted areas where Indigenous people could play a leading role in revitalizing the forest sector in Manitoba.
    - (no SPI funding, using SPI Terms and Conditions only).

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### Transcript of Question:

**Senator Jaffer:** In all transparency, I'm an egg and chicken farmer. One of the things, when floods or fires came nearby, there was a big worry about what would happen to the livestock.

From the Indigenous point of view, did you give any support to either save the livestock or take it to another place?

I would like to ask that to Ms. Hadden-Jokiel.

**Ms. Hadden-Jokiel:** Thank you for the question, senator. I'm not aware of any direct supports around livestock.

**Senator Jaffer:** Especially horses and things like that?

**Ms. Hadden-Jokiel:** James, I'm not sure if you have any additional information on that. It's not something that I'm familiar with.

**Mr. Moxon:** No.

**Ms. Hadden-Jokiel:** Support for the evacuation of livestock.

**Mr. Moxon:** I don't have any specific information on instances where that may have been supported. The Emergency Management Assistance Program, or EMAP, is focused on and supports primary home occupancy on reserve, whatever that primary occupancy may be, as well as band-owned critical infrastructure on reserve.

Financial support for expenditures related to small business, including farms and agricultural initiatives, aren't typically eligible under EMAP. However, there may be case-by-case specific situations I'm not aware of where there have been supports provided. I'm not aware right now. I don't have that in front of me.

**Senator Jaffer:** Can you provide that, please, to the clerk of the committee?

**Mr. Moxon:** We can look into that, yes.

**Senator Jaffer:** Will you be able to get that information, please?

**Mr. Moxon:** We'll look into that, yes.

**Answer:**

The costs associated with transporting animals (including emotional support or service animals) and livestock to and from kennels or other accommodations for the duration of the evacuation may be considered eligible under ISC's Emergency Management Assistance Program (EMAP) where these costs are not covered under another program or authority. This may include feeding, boarding and costs associated with tending to livestock on properties on-reserve.

EMAP does not typically cover costs for the loss of livestock due to an emergency as it does not support loss of opportunity/production (this is in line with the Guidelines for the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements from Public Safety Canada).

Consideration may be given if there is provincial comparability for existing supports.

On a case-by- case basis, EMAP can support loss of livestock if the program receives:

- Confirmation that the loss of livestock is linked to an EMAP eligible event;
- Confirmation that the animals lived on-reserve;
- Confirmation that this is not a profit-making business;
- Confirmation that the owners of the livestock did not have insurance for such situations; and
- Confirmation that the community members cannot access funding through other programs.

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### Transcript of Question:

**Senator Oh:** My apologies for being late. I had to chair another meeting.

My question for the panel is Alberta forest is being burned now. There must be hundreds of millions of acres that are being burned now. How does the return of the forest — what does the government help for funding in Indigenous land or outside of Indigenous land? What do you get for help from the government for re — whatever you called it, replanting or rejuvenation of the forests?

**Ms. Hadden-Jokiel:** Yes, I don't have extensive details on that, senator. But I do know our Strategic Partnerships . , that is a horizontal program that works across departments. They funded a number of reforestation-type projects, and we can certainly provide those to the clerk.

**Senator Oh:** Yes. And those are including Indigenous land?

**Ms. Hadden-Jokiel:** Yes. The program that we support would be on-reserve land.

**Senator Oh:** Okay. Thank you. If you could provide that to the clerk, that would be great.

### Answer:

- The Strategic Partnership Initiative (SPI) provides a way for 22 federal partners to coordinate their efforts, reduce administrative burden and pool resources in support of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. It works to increase and support Indigenous communities in large, complex, multi-year economic development opportunities across a variety of sectors in Canada. SPI's flexible terms and conditions provide our federal partners with a way to coordinate their efforts and reduce the administrative and reporting burden for recipients. This approach fills gaps in other funding programs that might create a barrier to Indigenous involvement in economic opportunities.
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