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BUDGET DISCRIMINATES AGAINST FIRST NATIONS, METIS AND INUIT
“Aboriginal people were told their poverty isn’t important” – Crowder

OTTAWA – There was no fairness for First Nations, Métis or Inuit in the Conservative’s new budget, said NDP Aboriginal Affairs critic Jean Crowder, MP for Nanaimo-Cowichan. “It was so disheartening to hear the Finance Minister saying this ‘was a budget for everyone’ while ignoring the real needs of First Nations living on reserve for better health care and housing; disregarding the end of funding authorities for the Urban Aboriginal Strategy and no more funding to deal with the Powley decision on Métis rights; and nothing for the Inuit at all,” said Crowder.

There is only \$21 million dollars of new spending for Aboriginal people in this budget. That works out to \$14 in spending for each Aboriginal person in Canada.

“Aboriginal people in Canada aspire to a standard of living most Canadians surpassed years ago because of social and health programs that helped lift many people out of poverty. This is another missed opportunity to close the poverty gap that First Nations, Métis and Inuit face and the Conservatives ignored it,” said Crowder.

“I have been meeting with Chiefs and activists from around the country and they have said that Aboriginal people are nearing a breaking point. The Conservatives disregard those warnings and talk about personal accountability. As if people living on a reserve or in the far North chose to be ignored by their federal government and have their needs for health care, safe housing and clean drinking water denied,” said Crowder.

“The NDP would have liked to see money in this budget to bring an end to the program spending cap and the three percent funding cap on First Nations and Inuit Health Branch and a commitment to closing the poverty gap as outlined in the First Ministers Meeting in November 2005 and spending for education that would offer young Aboriginal Canadians a chance to succeed in all of their aspirations,” said Crowder.

“This lack of action for more than half of the North’s population is unacceptable said Dennis Bevington MP (Western Arctic). “All Northern leaders have a duty to their constituents to stand together and protest the unfairness of this budget to Dene, Metis and Inuit, a budget is the sum of all its parts.”

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