



# NEWS RELEASE

## Successful First Nations in Canada support economic development and are fiscally responsible

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For immediate release

**VANCOUVER**—First Nations with the highest living standards capitalize on, rather than oppose the economic opportunities available to them, and are governed by long-serving, fiscally prudent leaders, finds a new study released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“The evidence is clear—successful First Nations rely on self-determination and make the most out of their own assets rather than relying on Ottawa for their prosperity,” said Tom Flanagan, a Fraser Institute senior fellow, professor emeritus of political science at the University of Calgary and author of *Why First Nations Succeed*.

Analyzing results from the department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs’ Community Well-Being Index (CWB)—which uses Statistics Canada data to measure income, employment, housing and education on First Nations—the study finds the most successful First Nations with the highest CWB scores have stable, fiscally prudent governments that are open to outside economic investment.

Opportunities that successful First Nations have capitalized on include recreation, tourism and natural resource development.

For example, the Fort McKay First Nation in Alberta—which scored 76 out of 100 on the CWB in 2011 compared to the average First Nation score of 59—provides services to oil sands installations, creating jobs for its members.

And it’s not just oil and gas. The Membertou First Nation near Sydney, Nova Scotia—which has a CWB score of 73—thrives as a tourist destination with a casino, hotels, a convention centre and a new commercial shopping district.

The Osoyoos Indian Band in B.C.’s Okanagan Valley, which also scored 73, operates more businesses per capita than any other First Nation in Canada, including three resorts, a golf course, the successful Nk’Mip Winery, and an aggregates business.

Interestingly, compensation for leaders of Canada’s most successful First Nations falls below the average salary of all First Nations leaders in the CWB database.

According to the study, the top 21 First Nations with the highest CWB scores spend \$4,309 per on-reserve resident (on average) to compensate chief and council, compared to \$5,371—the average for all First Nations.

“First Nations in Canada, like any government or individual, achieve genuine prosperity when they tap the potential of their communities and break the cycle of dependence,” Flanagan said.

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