



Orange Shirt Day – National Day for Truth and Reconciliation – September 30, 2025

Canada speaks publicly about nation-to-nation relationships and truth and reconciliation. But this bill is about exercising power over the First Peoples and our lands and resources. Bill C-5 is not reconciliation—it's a betrayal of it. Reconciliation is not symbolic, and it means atoning for colonial harms. But with Bill C-5, Canada is preparing to repeat those harms yet again.—*Temagami Chief Shelly Moore-Frappier*.¹

Just as the residential school system harmed Indigenous families and culture, indiscriminate resource exploitation and ecological destruction fueling both past and present settler economic development have disrupted the necessary reciprocal relationship between humans and our relations in the natural world. This year's National Day for Truth and Reconciliation – or Orange Shirt Day, so named to mark the intergenerational impacts of residential school – comes on the heels of opportunistic federal and provincial legislation that promises to further undermine the nation to nation relationship by ignoring treaty rights and the duty to obtain free prior and informed consent.

Those relations are foundational to Indigenous Ways of Living and Knowing and underpin the health of land, water and air that we all depend on. Fossil fuels, key contributors to the climate crisis, are extracted and transported in Indigenous territories. So too, the proposed indiscriminate extraction of critical minerals in the fragile, carbon-sequestering Breathing Lands, dubbed the Ring of Fire. Indigenous peoples have already suffered enormously from the consequences of resource extraction, with the ongoing degradation of their territories.

In fighting the climate emergency, SCAN! acknowledges our responsibility and affirms our resolve to support Indigenous peoples by upholding our obligations as set out in the TRC's Calls to Action, the MMWG2S+ inquiry's Calls for Justice and in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Likewise, we acknowledge and seek to learn from and promote the knowledge, leadership, and environmental work of Indigenous peoples. It is only by dint of their relentless efforts across the decades and across the land that such traditional knowledge and leadership have been safeguarded and nurtured to flourish in these times – despite attempts through the residential school system at complete erasure.

What can we do individually or acting together? We can learn more about Indigenous analysis of the climate crisis. We can show up for events like the recent Indigenous-led protests and rallies opposing Bill 5 and C-5. We can consider how our actions might better intersect with the protection of Indigenous rights, territories, and the natural world that sustains us all.

As we pause to mark Orange Shirt Day, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, we recognize the past and present harms of the residential school system and remind ourselves that we all have a role to play in reckoning with that history.

1. <https://chiefs-of-ontario.org/first-nations-leadership-united-in-opposition-to-liberal-governments-unprecedented-bill-c-5/>