



# UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

2026-03-10

Mayor Scott Gillingham  
Mayor of Winnipeg  
Via email only: [mayorgillingham@winnipeg.ca](mailto:mayorgillingham@winnipeg.ca)

## **OPEN LETTER: Protecting the Right to Peaceful Protest**

Dear Mayor Gillingham and Members of Winnipeg City Council:

On behalf of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), we write to express our deep concern regarding the recent proposal of the “Safe Access to Vulnerable Infrastructure” bylaw. While we understand that the proposal was ultimately withdrawn following significant public opposition, its introduction raises serious concerns about the potential erosion of fundamental democratic freedoms, including the right to peaceful protest.

Indigenous peoples across this country have long relied on public demonstration to defend our rights, lands, cultures, and communities. From the Red River Resistance to the decades-long movement that led to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, protest has been an essential and legitimate means for Indigenous peoples to seek justice and accountability. Measures that restrict access to public space for peaceful protest risk undermining these important democratic traditions.

We were encouraged to see the many Indigenous rights advocates, community members, and allies who came together to voice their concerns regarding the proposed bylaw. Their engagement reflects the strength of civil society and the importance of ensuring that municipalities respect and uphold the rights of residents to speak out on matters of public importance.

We urge the City of Winnipeg to ensure that any future discussions concerning public safety, demonstrations, or public space are undertaken with meaningful engagement and careful consideration of the constitutional rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. These rights are essential to a healthy democracy and must not be weakened through overly broad or restrictive measures.

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The Union of BC Indian Chiefs stands in solidarity with Indigenous peoples and community members in Winnipeg who continue to defend these rights and who remain vigilant in protecting the democratic freedoms that so many have struggled to secure.

## On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip  
President

Chief Councillor Linda Innes  
Vice-President

Chief Marilyn Slett  
Secretary-Treasurer

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