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# News Release    Communiqué

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## **GOVERNMENT OF CANADA SUPPORTS ABORIGINAL INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN MANITOBA**

**Ottawa, Ontario (April 27, 2009)** - The Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, today announced a contribution to the [First Peoples Economic Growth Fund](#) to establish a fund that will support First Nations involvement in major resource and energy projects in Manitoba.

“Our Government is committed to encouraging Aboriginal participation in resource and energy projects across Canada,” said Minister Strahl. “Through this unique approach, we are maximizing the benefits of our investment in Aboriginal economic development by leveraging capital from the private sector and other partners.”

The innovative new fund will include investments from both the Government of Canada and the First Peoples Economic Growth Fund. The fund will be used to increase First Nations participation in resource and energy projects across Manitoba. [Manitoba Hydro](#) will also provide assistance through its Affordable Energy Fund.

“The First Peoples Economic Growth Fund welcomes the Government of Canada and Manitoba Hydro as new contributors to our Fund, joining the Province of Manitoba. With their participation, we are now in a position to add a new Resource and Energy Financing Program to our existing menu of program offerings,” said Pat Turner, Chairperson of First Peoples Economic Growth Fund Board of Directors. “We feel confident that this expansion puts us in the right position to assist our clients to participate in a meaningful way in the economic opportunities in Manitoba.”

“Manitoba Hydro is interested in building a new relationship with Aboriginal people and participation in this fund will allow us to advance that goal while encouraging economic development,” said Bob Brennan, President and CEO of Manitoba Hydro.

The Government of Canada will provide \$3 million to help establish the fund through the [Major Resource and Energy Development \(MRED\) Investments Initiative](#), a pilot program run by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. These investments are designed to help Aboriginal businesses partner in some of the most important economic developments and energy projects in the country.

The First Peoples Economic Growth Fund was developed as a joint initiative between the Government of Manitoba and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. The fund is an

independent not-for-profit corporation designed to provide debt and equity financing to viable First Nations business proposals in Manitoba.

Over the past decade, Manitoba Hydro has made significant contributions towards a renewed relationship with Aboriginal peoples built on mutual respect, a committed understanding and more meaningful communication. In addition to this initiative, it is currently partnering with Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (NCN) in the construction of a new hydroelectric generating station in the NCN resource area, a partnership unique in Canada.

Through the MRED Investments Initiative and other Aboriginal economic development measures, the Government of Canada is demonstrating its continued commitment to increasing Aboriginal participation in the Canadian economy.

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This release is also available on the Internet at [www.inac.gc.ca](http://www.inac.gc.ca) and at [www.firstpeoplesfund.ca](http://www.firstpeoplesfund.ca)

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