

# MEDIA RELEASE



Maw-lukutijik **Saqmaq**  
Assembly of Nova Scotia  
**Mi'kmaw Chiefs**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Doors Open for Discussions About Establishing a MOU on the Whale Sanctuary Project**

**Mi'kma'ki** - For several years a group of dedicated individuals have been working toward establishing the Whale Sanctuary Project (WSP) - the first seaside sanctuary for marine mammals in North America – to be located in Wine Harbour, Nova Scotia.

Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn was first notified about the WSP's lease request through the *Terms of Reference for a Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia–Canada Consultation Process* in October 2021. Since that time, discussions have been ongoing with the Nova Scotia government and the team at the WSP about this important project.

Since its inception, the WSP has been working to bring whales and dolphins currently held in captivity to a seaside sanctuary they are looking to create in the waters off Nova Scotia.

“Every living species is important to the Mi'kmaq. Respecting and caring for them are part of our traditional understandings and long-held cultural beliefs. Opening discussions to work alongside the WSP is something that we are all very intrigued by,” said Chief Tamara Young, Co-Lead of Environment, Energy and Mines with the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs (Assembly).

The marine mammal market does not align with Mi'kmaw principals and the Assembly support these animals living out the rest of their lives in a natural ocean environment on the unceded and traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq.

“If we can have a role in helping to move whales out of captivity into a more natural and freer environment, then we will certainly do that,” continued Chief Young. “We understand that WSP has a lot more work to make the sanctuary happen, but the issue was too important for the Mi'kmaq not to be involved with and to express our support for. These marine animals are not just resources, they are spiritual beings with a purpose and must be respected”.

It is hoped in the coming weeks, discussions will continue so that an official Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) can be established between the WSP and the Assembly.

“We share similar values with WSP when it comes to protecting these marine animals, such as respect, reciprocity, sharing and stewardship. WSP has made strong commitments to incorporate and amplify Mi'kmaw values and knowledge systems throughout its operations and we appreciate that. We look forward to seeing where these discussions go and to help bring an end to the exploitation of whales living in captivity and finding ways to protect them in our shared oceans”, said Chief Young.

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