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Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation: Smith's two-step referendum is a cynical waste of time and money.

FORT CHIPEWYAN, AB, May 22, 2026. Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN) Chief and Council are responding to Premier Danielle Smith's televised address last night, announcing a deliberately confusing question for the October 19 ballot: a referendum on whether to hold a referendum on separation.

The convoluted plan is a retreat from the binding question separatists were pushing, forced by the successful court challenge launched by ACFN.

"Just like in 1812, First Nations stood side by side with patriotic Canadians to defend this country against American annexation. We took action while others sat on their hands. The threat to Canadian sovereignty is deadly serious. Their goal is to destroy Canada," said Chief Allan Adam. "We drove Smith into the open and forced her to abandon a binding question."

"Once again, the court has recognized the constitutional duty to consult, but this is not just a victory for Indigenous people. When the court upholds the constitution, it affirms everyone's rights. This is a victory for all patriotic Canadians."

ACFN is calling on Prime Minister Mark Carney to refer the question to Parliament, as required by the Clarity Act. ACFN expects Parliament to quickly find that the question is not compliant.

"This entire mess has been a cynical political exercise by the Premier. It serves no one in Alberta. A referendum on whether to hold a referendum is not a clear question. This whole thing is a waste of time and money," said Chief Adam.

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