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# PRESS RELEASE

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## **LIA One Step Closer to Land Claims Agreement**

November 16, 2004 St. John's, NL

(St. John's) This morning, Labrador Inuit Association (LIA) President William Andersen III and Chief Negotiator Toby Andersen met with provincial Cabinet Ministers at Confederation Building to impress upon them the importance of moving ahead with legislation to enact the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement (LILCA).

The Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement has to be ratified by both levels of government and the Senate before coming into effect. Labrador Inuit ratified the agreement on May 26, 2004.

Mr. Andersen said, "I am very pleased with the reception we had this morning from the Cabinet Ministers, and especially the cooperation shown by the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Tom Rideout, and by the Premier. They committed to introducing legislation in the House of Assembly before Christmas. With the support we have been shown by Liberal MHAs, many of whom were in the government when the agreement was initialed in 2003, and the support of the NDP Party, I am hoping that the agreement will be passed in the House before Christmas."

The next step in the ratification process is to ensure the agreement remains a high priority for the federal government. LIA meetings with MPs and Senators in Ottawa are ongoing. LIA is hoping for approval by the federal cabinet this month, and for legislation to be enacted by Spring 2005. Labrador Senator Bill Rompkey has committed to sponsoring the land claims Bill in the Senate after its passage in the House of Commons. "Meetings in Ottawa with Newfoundland and Labrador MPs, opposition party MPs, Inuit MPs and Senators have been positive so far", said President Andersen. "But much work still lies ahead. We have to make sure our agreement is understood by Canadians and is seen as a priority beyond departmental and party politics."

LIA Chief Negotiator Toby Andersen, said, "After 27 years, Labrador Inuit are anxious to have the agreement ratified, especially since Inuit overwhelmingly voted 76.4% in favour of the agreement last May."

The LIA is a non-profit corporation representing approximately 5,300 Inuit and Kablunângajuit of Labrador. LIA is responsible for advancing the aboriginal, constitutional, democratic, social and human rights of Labrador Inuit. For more information on LIA, visit [www.nunatsiavut.com](http://www.nunatsiavut.com)

President Andersen will be available today for interviews via telephone or in person. For further information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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