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Dewar Calls On Government To Build National Aboriginal Centre On Victoria Island For 2013

OTTAWA – In a statement to the House of Commons, New Democrat MP Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre) called on the government to begin construction of a National Aboriginal Centre on Victoria Island and plan for completion by June 2013.

Text of Dewar's statement:

"Mr. Speaker, for centuries before de Champlain's arrival, the Chaudière Falls and Victoria Island were a sacred meeting place for indigenous peoples. The area has been the site of cultural convergence, political evolution, and influential innovation.

"Today the land sits in the shadow of parliament hill, awaiting the building of a National Aboriginal Centre, envisioned by Elder William Commanda.

"The island would host an Aboriginal Centre, a Peace Building Meeting Site, an Eco Park, a research institute, and a Historic Interpretive Centre. World-renowned Canadian architect, Douglas Cardinal, has captured the land's heritage in a masterpiece.

"Mr. Speaker, the government must review its 2004 and 2006 commitments to the materialization of the National Aboriginal Centre.

"Let us prepare for a grand opening in June 2013, to showcase and celebrate the heritage of this sacred site on the four hundredth anniversary of de Champlain's arrival".

Dewar is working with Elder Commanda, Douglas Cardinal and community representatives on launching an official campaign for the building of the National Aboriginal Centre on Victoria Island on June 21, 2009, the National Aboriginal Day.