



ASSEMBLY OF
FIRST NATIONS

ASSEMBLÉE DES
PREMIÈRES NATIONS

Specific Claims Updates

National Claims Research Directors

April 2026



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Overview

1. Resolution Implementation Updates
2. Federal fiscal environment
3. Research funding
4. Upcoming Access to Information Act review
5. Specific claims reform
6. Additions to reserve reform



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Resolution Updates

RESOLUTION	UPDATES
RESEARCH FUNDING	
Resolution 57/2025, <i>Condemning Canada's Specific Claims Research Funding Cut</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Chief's letter and intervention at opportunities with federal ministers• AFN strategic communication plan in development• AFN pre-budget submission in development
SPECIFIC CLAIMS REFORM	
Resolution 11/2024, <i>Ensuring Access to Justice for Specific Claims through Policy Reform</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuing to assess the federal environment and how to position reform advocacy• Recognize a need to re-engage partners and seek guidance from the Chiefs Committee on Lands, Territories, and Resources• Need to re-establish the AFN – Canada Joint Technical Working Group
Resolution 09/2020, <i>Jointly Develop a Fully Independent Specific Claims Process</i>	




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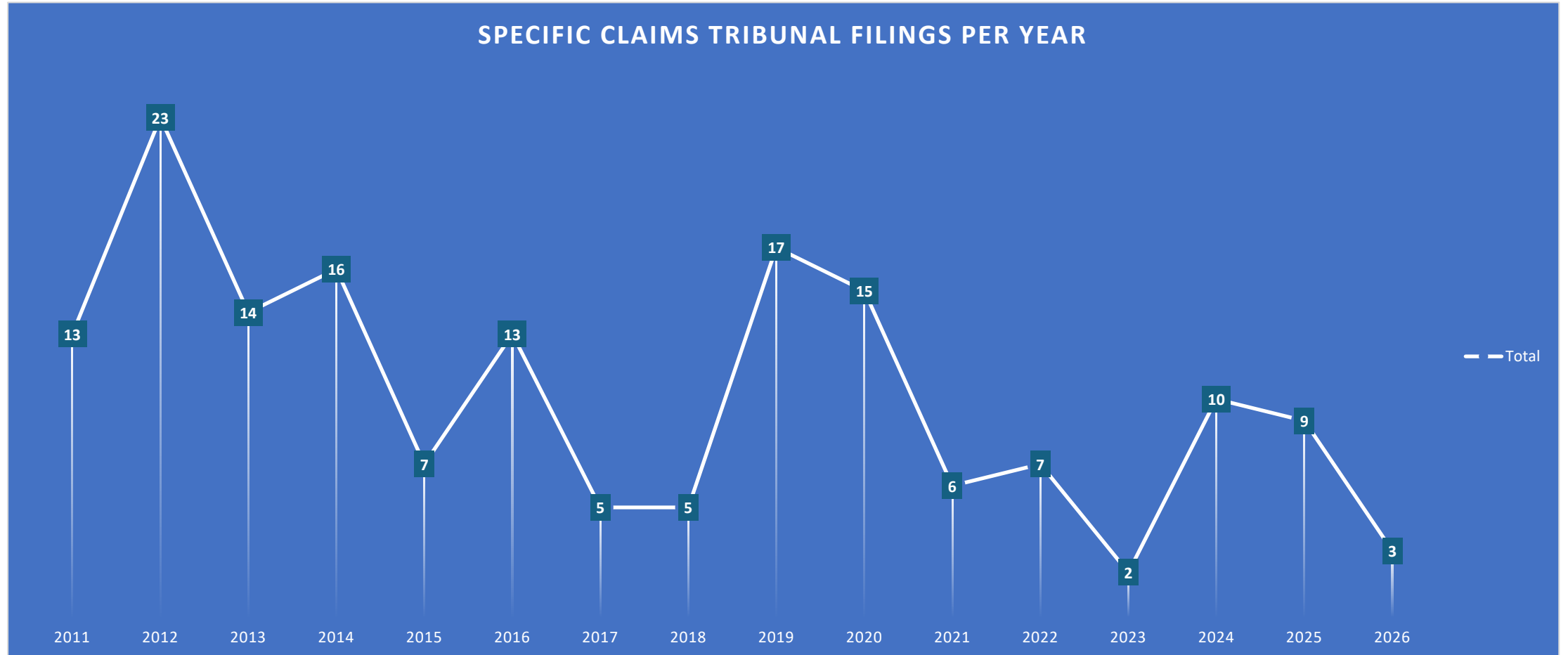
Fiscal Update – Main Estimates

- The 2026-27 Main Estimates were tabled in March and outline CIRNAC's planned expenditures for the 2026-27 fiscal year.
- There are no indications regarding the **Specific Claims Research Funding Program**.

Program	2025-26	2026-27
Grants to First Nations to settle specific claims	\$4.78 billion	\$4.34 billion

 \$440 million decrease

Specific Claims Tribunal Filings



Specific Claims Tribunal Chairperson?

- **section 7 (1)** *Each member shall be appointed for a term not exceeding five years and holds office so long as he or she remains a superior court judge. [Specific Claims Tribunal Act]*
- Justice Chiapetta was appointed by Order in Council 2020-1031 (December 2020).
- Now being April 2026, it remains unclear under what authorities if there is a Chairperson of the Tribunal.
- No subsequent appointment instrument has been issued.

Specific Claims Tribunal – Chairperson and Part-time Member

Issue

The term of the current Chairperson expires on December 11, 2025, and one part-time member expired on April 12, 2025. In accordance with the *Specific Claims Tribunal Act*, these appointments are a joint responsibility between Justice Canada and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC).

Context

Candidates to these positions must be sitting superior court justices. [Redacted]

Decision

[Redacted]



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Fiscal Update – 2026-27 Departmental Plan

The Departmental Plan's framing of specific claims is concerning for the direction of the program and reform:

Non-committal to substantial reform

*CIRNAC will continue exploring options for **operational improvements** that further align the Specific Claims resolution process with UNDRIP. The department will also continue to gather First Nations perspectives on the process and learn about the impacts of settlements on communities through **voluntary feedback***

Mixed messaging on reform

Efforts are underway to reform the Specific Claims program to address longstanding concerns by First Nations about the fairness of the process, improve collaboration, and enhance access to resources.

[CIRNAC 2026-27 Departmental Plan]



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Fiscal Update – Contingent Liabilities

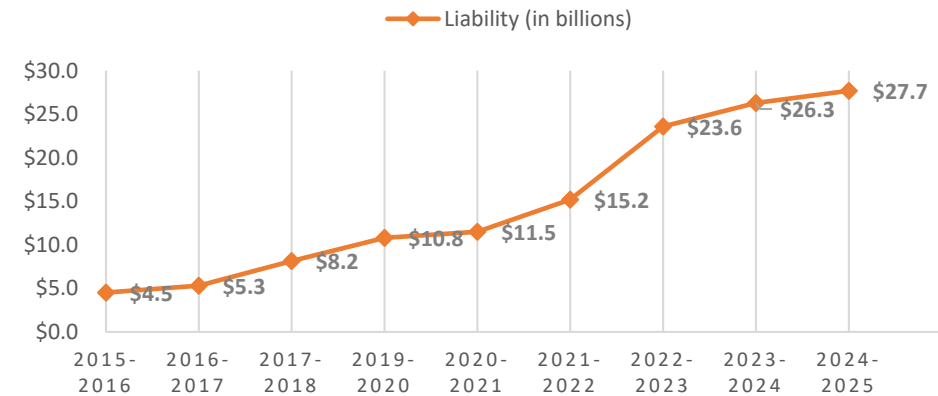
- Federal contingent liabilities arising from unresolved specific claims continue to grow:

Year	Est. Liability
2024	\$26.3 billion
2025	\$27.7 billion



5.5% YoY

SPECIFIC CLAIMS CONTINGENT LIABILITIES





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Research Funding Crisis

The AFN continues to await the government's Spring Fiscal Update, which will be the next opportunity for research funding to be addressed.

The National Chief wrote to Prime Minister Carney, reinforcing calls from over 100 First Nations for a sustainable research funding program.

To continue to support First Nations advocacy, the AFN is preparing tools to support direct First Nations advocacy:

Dedicated microsite

Social media campaign



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Protected: Make Your Voice Heard on the Specific Claims Research Funding Crisis > Protected: Make Your Voice Heard on the Specific Claims Research Funding Crisis

Make Your Voice Heard on the Specific Claims Research Funding Crisis



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Access to Information Act Review

01

The First-Nations-in-Assembly have mandated the AFN to support First Nations advocacy related to the legislated review of the ATIA through AFN Resolution 2025/29, *Transformative Change of the Access to Information Regime*.

02

We recognize that First Nations require provisions in the ATIA to obtain historical documents necessary to develop their claims.

03

The AFN will continue to monitor activity, support direct First Nations advocacy, and coordinate with research directors and regions as opportunities arise.



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Specific Claims Reform

- All indications suggest Canada does not have a mandate for renewed discussions on specific claims reform with First Nations.
- There have been no technical discussions or engagement since the 2025 federal election.
- The AFN continues to support advocacy opportunities, including:
 - Supporting First Nations in parliamentary advocacy
 - Supporting advocacy initiatives and coordination
 - Supporting the National Chief and First Nations leadership



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ATR Reform

- Nine interim changes reduce administrative burden but fall short of transformative reform.
- No draft policy released despite fall 2025 target; lack of federal mandates, defined timelines, and post-FY funding continues to impede reform.
- Ongoing engagement through the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), but overall direction remains unclear.



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ATR Reform – Continued

- Draft policy and directives under development with emerging concerns regarding overall direction.
- CIRNAC leading the process under “co-development,” with limited TAC involvement in drafting and minimal incorporation of feedback.
- Current approach diverges from co-development principles, raising concerns regarding accountability and commitment to transformative reform.
- Direction risks deviating from First Nations-identified priorities.



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Thank you

Questions and Discussion

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