

DECLARATION

We the VANCOUVER ISLAND FIRST NATIONS WITHIN THE E&N LAND GRANT AREA being sovereign Nations and the rightful, legal occupants with Aboriginal Title and Rights, Douglas Treaty Rights, and Indigenous Human Rights to our territories as given us by our Creator do hereby declare that:

Whereas the government of BC granted 2 million acres of land to the government of Canada in the late 1800's and the government of Canada subsequently unlawfully granted these lands to James Dunsmuir of the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway in "private" fee simple ownership (E&N Land Grant) and these lands have passed from one corporate entity to another since then.

And whereas the E&N Land Grant was a violation of our Aboriginal Title and Rights in our ancestral lands and a fundamental breach of Douglas Treaty rights and Crown obligations arising from Douglas Treaties.

And whereas our First Nations were never informed, consulted or offered any restitution for any of these actions.

And whereas the government of Canada continues to refuse to offer any form of restitution resulting from their actions.

And whereas our First Nations continue to be refused any form of consultation, consent, environmental impact assessments or benefit sharing with respect to any decisions being made on these "private" lands.

And whereas this unlawful granting of our Traditional territories has had a devastating effect on our communities that have depended on and continue to depend on access to our land to carry on our traditional subsistence, religious and other cultural practices and this privatization, has facilitated the destruction of our special relationship to our invaluable forest lands.

And whereas as a result of the Crown's inability to effectively regulate these private forest lands, intense clear-cut logging has resulted in the deforestation of these lands with only a very small percentage of original old growth forest left. This privatization has also severely impacted essential water supplies, traditional medicinal plants, and fishery and wildlife populations.

WE THEREFORE DECLARE THAT:

We never surrendered or ceded our traditional territories and we therefore object to decisions being made on these "private" lands without our consultation and accommodation and where necessary our consent.

Canada, BC and corporate entities have an obligation under domestic and international law to honour our right to be consulted about decisions being made on these "private" lands and we call upon them to fulfil this obligation now and into the future.

We collectively object to the current proposed sale of the TimberWest stapled units which includes these "private" lands, within our traditional territories to the Canada and BC pension funds and any other potential buyer without prior consultation with our nations.