

FIRST NATIONS UNITY PROTOCOL AGREEMENT

NEWS RELEASE

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Five more BC First Nations sign Unity Protocol Agreement as frustration in treaty process grows

Tsleil Waututh Territory/North Vancouver, BC—Five more First Nations, including the Ahousaht First Nation, Gitanyow First Nation, Kitselas First Nation, Sechelt Indian Band and Tsleil-Waututh Nation, today signed onto the Unity Protocol agreement.

This brings the total to 45 First Nations, representing over 25,000 First Nations people from across British Columbia, who are working to proactively develop a proactive solution to remove the barriers that have slowed negotiations at many treaty tables across the province.

“There are common issues and concerns that many First Nations continue to face in their negotiations as a result of the federal and provincial governments failure to engage in real negotiations that recognize our aboriginal rights and title,” said Robert Morales, Chair of the First Nations Summit Chief Negotiators.

“The addition of five more First Nations demonstrates the growing frustration of many First Nations and the importance of the Unity Protocol to the future treaty making process. We are committed to that goal, but we cannot and will not stand idly by given the current process and lack of substantive results,” added Morales.

The Unity Protocol, which was formed in October 2006, is intended to jointly engage Canada and British Columbia in the negotiation of principles or options that all parties can rely upon when negotiating individual treaties. Specifically this involves negotiations on six key issues, including: Certainty; Constitutional Status of Treaty Lands; Governance; Co-Management throughout traditional territories; Fiscal Relations and Taxation; and Fisheries.

“The reality at many negotiating tables is that Canada and British Columbia have imposed rigid positions with pre-defined outcomes that are contrary to the sincere, good-faith negotiations that are a requirement for this process to be a success. As the Auditor-General recently reported, since 1992, it is estimated that over \$1 billion has been spent on negotiations. If we are to truly have resolution and certainty in our province, we simply cannot continue this way,” said Morales.

The Unity Protocol members urge the federal and provincial governments to honour the recommendations of the 1991 tri-partite *Claims Task Force Report* which is the foundation for treaty negotiations in BC and revitalize the process so all First Nations can have certainty and resolution.

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MEMBERS OF THE FIRST NATIONS UNITY PROTOCOL:**Ditidaht First Nation****Hamatla Treaty Society**

Campbell River
Cape Mudge
K'ómoks
Kwiakah

Gitanyow First Nation**Gitga'at****Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group**

Chemainus
Cowichan
Halalt
Lake Cowichan
Lyackson
Penelakut

Hupacasath First Nation**Kitselas First Nation****Northern Shuswap Treaty Society**

Canim Lake
Canoe Creek
Soda Creek
Williams Lake

Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

Ahousaht
Ehattesaht
Hesquiaht
Mowachaht
Muchalaht
Nuchatlaht
Tla-o-qui-aht
Tseshaht

Pacheedaht First Nation**Quatsino First Nation****Sechelt Indian Band****Snuneymuxw First Nation****Sto:lo Nation**

Aitchelitz
Chawathil
Cheam
Kwaw-kwaw-a-pilt
Leq' a: mel
Matsqui
Popkum
Scowlitz
Seabird Island
Shxwhá:y
Shxw'ow'hamel
Skawahlook
Skowkale
Soowahlie
Squiala
Sumas
Tzeachten
Yakweawioose

Tseil-Waututh First Nation**Westbank First Nation**

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