



# FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

## NEWS RELEASE

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*For Immediate Release*

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### **First Nations call on the B.C. government to work with them to improve relations with the mining sector**

**Coast Salish Traditional Territory/Vancouver, BC** -- The First Nations Summit calls on the provincial government to support First Nations working to improve their often contentious relationship with the mining sector. This request is consistent with the government's own recent efforts to fund BC mining industry associations.

This week, the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources provided \$100,000 to the Association for Mineral Exploration British Columbia and the Mining Association of British Columbia, respectively, to support relationship building between their sector and First Nations.

"The government's support to the mining sector shows it has the same goal as First Nations, to improve relations all around. We applaud the provincial government's effort to encourage the mining industry to work with us, and now we expect this kind of support will be afforded to First Nations to allow us to engage with the industry in turn," said Dave Porter, a member of the political executive of the First Nations Summit.

In an effort to build positive relations with the mining sector, the BC Assembly of First Nations, the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, the Kaska Tribal Council, and the Taku River Tlingit First Nation, with support from the First Nations Summit, are co-hosting a First Nations mining summit in Prince George in October.

This summit meeting will give representatives from mining companies and associations, federal and provincial governments, and NGOs an opportunity to address mining concerns with First Nations chiefs and leaders. "The mining summit presents a historic opportunity for First Nations to chart a new course in this sector, which will include reaching a common understanding on how First Nations, governments, and the mining industry can best approach exploration and mining within First Nations' territories," said Mr. Porter.

Given mineral prices currently remain high, this year's drilling season will be intense. When this level of activity is added on to the nearly two dozen mine applications in the environmental review process, controversy is likely to follow. "Because First Nations remain under-resourced to deal with these pressures, friction and conflict on the land and in the regulatory process will continue. This can often jeopardize legitimate opportunities and benefits for all concerned," said Mr. Porter. "This must change."

In the New Relationship, the Premier agreed to change the way business was done in the province. This is no less true of the mining sector, which is why First Nations are asking governments and others to support their efforts to address exploration and mining in a proactive way.

"We should work together in B.C. to avoid what's currently happening in Ontario, where the chief and council of the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) First Nation, and a respected leader of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation, have been unjustly jailed as a result of conflicts with exploration companies. We are interested in building relationships rather than conflict," said Mr. Porter.

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The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in the treaty negotiation process in British Columbia. Further background information on the Summit may be found at [www.fns.bc.ca](http://www.fns.bc.ca).

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