

All Chiefs Assembly United in Rejection of Proposed Legislation
The Recognition and Reconciliation legislation is Dead

(Coast Salish Traditional Territory/Vancouver, BC - August 28, 2009) - Chiefs and leaders came together this week in a BC All Chiefs Assembly to discuss the proposed Recognition and Reconciliation legislation. The Assembly unanimously endorsed an action strategy to be implemented by an Indigenous Title Action Group on a provincial, national and international level.

“When we travelled through the province, to the many regional sessions and community meetings, we consistently heard the deep concerns of the potential impacts of the proposed legislation on our Indigenous Title and Rights. Our people and leadership judge the Province not by their words but their continued actions that infringe on their territories and resources. The Province of British Columbia cannot and does not have jurisdiction over our Indigenous Title and Rights and as such the proposed legislation is dead,” said Grand Chief Edward John of the First Nations Summit Task Group.

“The Assembly is calling for an immediate implementation and enforcement of our Indigenous Title and Rights as called for by the United Nations’ Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,” said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. “Clearly the Premier and his government have not acted honourably through the course of the so-called ‘New Relationship.’ Indigenous communities demand substance not empty platitudes. Rather than breaking down the outdated legal barriers and the archaic colonial attitudes of the bureaucracy, Indigenous communities, such as the Xeni Gwet’in or those of the Common Table, are facing deliberately constructed and illegal denial strategies of their Title and Rights in court and in their negotiations. That must stop.”

“This week’s All Chiefs Assembly has strengthened our unity to work collectively on the outstanding and unresolved title issues of this province. We call on the Province of British Columbia to immediately change its deplorable conduct and fully implement on an honourable basis our Indigenous Title and Rights that are constitutionally recognized and judicially reaffirmed. We have reaffirmed that our Title and Rights are inherited from our ancestral origins as Indigenous Peoples and we recognize our inherit responsibility to bestow our Title and Rights to those unborn,” concluded Chief Nelson Leon, BCAFN spokesperson.

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