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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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First Nations urged to exercise their right to vote in the Provincial election on May 12

Coast Salish Territory/ North Vancouver –First Nations Chiefs are calling on all eligible First Nations voters to exercise this important right to have their voices heard by ensuring they are registered to vote and heading to the polls on election day.

"With 203 different First Nations across the province, and many thousands of eligible voters, our numbers can make a difference in many ridings throughout BC", said Grand Chief Doug Kelly, First Nations Summit Task Group member. "I encourage our communities to familiarize themselves with the platforms of each party and their local candidates to make an informed choice for themselves and their community."

"It is our children and grandchildren who have been forced, on a daily basis, to endure the appalling conditions of poverty of our communities. Therefore, it only makes sense that our youth take every advantage to vote in the upcoming provincial election," said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. "Whoever wins the election will play a significant part in influencing important decisions concerning our economic well-being in relation to revenue sharing and shared decision-making which underscores the need for the voices of our young people to be heard."

"This year marks the 60 year anniversary of First Nations receiving the right to vote in BC thanks to the efforts of the Native Brotherhood of BC." said BC Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations A-in-chut (Shawn Atleo). "1949 was also the year Frank Calder became the first Aboriginal elected to the legislature. It is heartening to see three First Nations candidates in this election following the trail blazed by Calder" he added.

Troy Sebastien (Ktunaxa) is running in the Kootenay-East riding for the NDP. Marion Wright (Kwakiutl Band) is contesting the North Island riding for the BC Liberals, and Liz Logan (Dene/Fort Nelson First Nation) is the Green candidate for Peace River North. Information on the provincial election and all parties taking part can be found at the Elections BC website at www.elections.bc.ca.

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The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

The Council works together to politically represent the interests of First Nations in British Columbia and develop strategies and actions to bring about significant and substantive changes to government policy that will benefit all First Nations in British Columbia.

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