



News Release

BC First Nations Leadership Council Pegs Residential Schools Settlement Announcement as a Keystone for Reconciliation

For Immediate Release:

May 11, 2006

Coast Salish Traditional Territory/Vancouver, BC – The BC First Nations Leadership Council commends the public announcement made yesterday by Indian Affairs and Northern Development Minister Jim Prentice that the federal government has given final approval to the Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and confirmed an early payment of \$8,000 for residential school survivors who were 65 or older as of May 30, 2005.

The settlement announced in the House of Commons marks an historic and impressive day for First Nations in the journey towards reconciliation and healing for First Nations' families and communities as well as in our relationship with Canada. There has been incredible determination and resolve demonstrated by National Chief Phil Fontaine and also by the federal negotiator, Honorable Frank Iacobucci, to reach a fair and just resolution. The Settlement Agreement must now be approved by the courts in nine jurisdictions at which point, survivors will have a mandatory six-month period to review the agreement details.

The First Nations Leadership Council recognizes that there is still work to be done, and the Residential Schools agreement does not negate the devastation and tragedy that First Nations people endured. More than 80,000 survivors are alive today, and the legacy of intergenerational effects continues to impact all aspects of First Nations' lives. However, the final Agreement provides a strong path for healing and rebuilding that will ensure the restoration of hope and well-being for our people, our families, our communities, and our culture.

Residential School Survivors may find the application form for Advance Payment on the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada website at www.irsr-rqpi.gc.ca and further information is available on the Assembly of First Nations website at www.afn.ca/residential_schools/.

-30-

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

For more information:

Chief Stewart Phillip, Union of BC Indian Chiefs (250) 490-5314

Colin Braker, First Nations Summit (604) 926-9903

Heather Gillies, BC Assembly of First Nations (604) 922-7733