



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

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First Nations Summit welcomes the appointment of a new Environment Minister with its own message on the environment

COAST SALISH TERRITORY/VANCOUVER, B.C. - The First Nations Summit welcomes Honourable John Baird as the new federal Environment Minister. The First Nations Summit will endeavour to arrange a meeting with the new Minister in order to deliver a number of key environmental messages.

"We view the Conservative government's appointment of Mr. Baird as a clear signal that the government has put environmental concerns at the top of its agenda, where we hope it will remain," said Dave Porter, a member of political executive of the First Nations Summit. "B.C. First Nations have a number of key environmental messages that we would like to deliver to Minister Baird.

"One message we will deliver is the federal government must address important local environmental issues in addition to any activities on climate change.

"For example, Northgate Mineral's Kemess North copper-gold mine project, currently before federal-provincial review panel, is threatening to kill off a pristine, fish-bearing lake in the traditional territory of the Tse Keh Nay Nation. We will ask the Minister to support the ecological integrity of that lake and the valley it lies in. To do otherwise would seriously detract from the Conservative's message that it is now taking the high road on environmental protection," said Mr. Porter.

"Another message is First Nations want to harmonize their own environmental assessment criteria for major projects with the government's existing review process. Right now this approach is lacking and that is causing problems."

- 30 -

The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in the treaty negotiation process in British Columbia as well as on other issues of common concern.

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