



# FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

## NEWS RELEASE

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:*

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### **First Nations Summit looks for government to follow through on Throne Speech in upcoming budget**

Vancouver, BC – Leaders of the First Nations Summit will await next week's provincial budget to see if the government will follow through on their commitments to First Nations made in today's and last year's Speech from the Throne.

"While last year's Throne Speech spoke of the government's commitment to recognition and reconciliation of aboriginal rights and title, this has yet to translate into concrete results for First Nations in British Columbia," said Grand Chief Edward John, member of the First Nations Summit political executive.

"Additionally, their policy position in the courts is completely opposite to what is needed to truly see progress. In two important cases to be heard in the Supreme Court of Canada in March 2004, the government's position amounts to a fundamental denial of Aboriginal rights and title," added John.

Notwithstanding this, First Nations remain committed to good faith negotiations with this, and the federal government.

"The Agreements-in-Principle referred to in the Throne Speech are far from complete. All of the large and contentious issues have, in effect, been punted to the final agreement stage. We see serious problems emerging as both governments have taken a "take it or leave it" approach," added John.

"The government has proceeded with a number of interim agreements, which are important building blocks for treaties, but in themselves these agreements do not provide the certainty industry and investors need, because they are short-term and limited in scope," said Lydia Hwitsum, also a member of the First Nations Summit political executive.

"As we look to create more economic opportunity for First Nations, we must ensure social development is not left behind. We are working cooperatively with a number of ministers to develop a strategy to improve the serious socio-economic situation of our people and will be looking to next week's budget for the government's financial commitment to support their political statements," added Hwitsum.

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

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