

FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

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First Nations Summit congratulates Akisq'nuk First Nation on Specific Claims Tribunal Victory

Coast Salish Traditional Territory (Vancouver) The First Nations Summit congratulates and commends the Akisq'nuk First Nation on their successful specific claim which was recognized in a decision of *Specific Claims Tribunal Canada (SCTC)* released on February 5, 2016. In the decision, the Tribunal ruled that Canada breached its legal obligation to the Akisq'nuk First Nation by failing to correct an 1887 land survey error, and again in 1915, when it failed to protect additional grazing lands from alienation. Both historical events resulted in significant losses of Akisq'nuk reserve lands during the reserve creation process.

The First Nations Summit is encouraging Prime Minister Trudeau and the federal Liberal government to accept and respect the decision of the independent tribunal which has a clear mandate to adjudicating and resolving specific claims.

Quote:

"We congratulate the Akisq'nuk leadership, staff, legal counsel, and community members for their hard work and perseverance in bringing this specific claim forward. This important decision has confirmed the decades old injustices and mistakes made by Canada which led to a significant and unjust loss of land for the community. Canada must accept and respect the decision of SCTC and participate honourably and fairly in the compensation phase of Akisq'nuk's Specific Claim." Cheryl Casimer, Political Executive, First Nations Summit.

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Background

The Specific Claims Tribunal, established on October 16, 2008, is part of the Federal Government's Justice at Last policy and joint initiative with the Assembly of First Nations aimed at accelerating the resolution of specific claims in order to provide justice for First Nations claimants and certainty for government, industry and all Canadians.

First Nations have a choice to file a claim with the Tribunal - an independent adjudicative body comprised of up to 6 full time Federal judges appointed from Provincial Superior Courts across the country.

The term "specific claims" generally refers to monetary damage claims made by a First Nation against the Crown regarding the administration of land and other First Nation assets and to the fulfillment of Indian treaties that have not been accepted for negotiation or that have not been resolved through a negotiated settlement within a specified time frame.

*A copy of the SCTC decision in Akisq'nuk FN v. Canada can be found at:
<http://sct-trp.ca/apption/cms/UploadedDocuments/20127006/111-SCT-7006-12-Doc50%28typed%29.pdf>*

The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. The Summit is also a NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

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