

First Nations Summit

NEWS RELEASE

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First Nations Summit cautiously optimistic regarding Indigenous investments in Federal Budget 2019

Coast Salish Territory, Vancouver, British Columbia – The First Nations Summit (FNS) leadership is encouraged by the significant indigenous investments outlined in the 2019 federal budget released yesterday.

The 2019 federal budget includes 24 measures for Indigenous peoples, totaling approximately \$4.7 billion including;

- \$1.371b for Redressing Past Wrongs and Advancing Self-Determination, including the forgiveness of treaty negotiation loan debt for past and present negotiations
- \$103m for Strengthening Governance Tools
- \$4.5b in additional investments to closing the socio-economic gaps faced by Indigenous peoples
- \$1.432b in investments related to First Nations and Inuit Children including \$1.212B to continue implementation of Jordan's Principle
- \$334m for Preserving, promoting and Revitalizing Indigenous Languages
- \$1.285b for improvements related to healthy and safe Indigenous communities

"The continued implementation of Jordan's Principle to provide a "child-first" approach to resolving jurisdictional disputes regarding the provision of services to First Nations children is critically important and we welcome Canada's additional investments over the next three years", said Cheryl Casimer of the FNS Political executive. "However, we have some concerns that Budget 2019 did not identify any funds to support the implementation of Bill C-92, *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*, which is currently before Parliament and will hopefully be passed before summer. It will be critical for the federal government to commit the funds necessary to properly implement this important piece of legislation prior to the next election".

"We welcome Canada's significant investment towards preserving, promoting and revitalizing Indigenous Languages. This investment is especially noteworthy this year as 2019 has been designated as the United Nations Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL2019)", said Grand Chief Edward John, of the FNS Political Executive. "Indigenous Languages are the essence and fabric of Indigenous cultures and are fundamental to our survival, dignity and well-being as Indigenous peoples. Language is our inherent right and is central to our cultural and spiritual identities as First Nations. These important investments will contribute to our collective efforts to prevent the extinction of the remaining Indigenous languages in Canada".

"We are also encouraged by Canada's community investments, including additional funding to ensure all indigenous communities have access to clean safe drinking water, as well as funding for assisted living and long-term care", added Robert Phillips of the FNS Political Executive. "However, we do have some concerns regarding the limited funds identified to address on-reserve emergency response. The \$250 million over five years in national funding represents the funding we need in BC alone, especially following the devastating impacts felt by BC First Nations during the record-breaking wildfire seasons of 2017 and 2018. We sincerely hope further investments to adequately support BC First Nations emergency management and response will be identified in future federal budgets".

For further information:

Colin Braker, Communications Director, FNS: 604-926-9903

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 information on the First Nations Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.