

First Nations Summit

STATEMENT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Indigenous issues must be at the forefront for newly elected majority government

Xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵw̓xwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)/ Vancouver, BC – Leaders of the First Nations Summit (FNS) are sending congratulations to Premier-elect John Horgan and the NDP on what appears to be a clear majority government following the October 24th provincial election, although several hundred thousand mail-in ballots are still to be counted.

The FNS will be encouraging Premier Horgan and his new Cabinet, once appointed, to have Indigenous issues at the forefront of their mandate over the next four years. In particular, the new government will need to prioritize working in collaboration and partnership with First Nations and Indigenous organizations to close the social and economic gaps faced by Indigenous people and to fully implement the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*. As well, the government needs to address the dreadful opioid crisis, systemic racism in BC, including in the healthcare and justice systems, the climate change crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2020 provincial election saw a high number of Indigenous candidates and we are hopeful that this will lead to increased numbers of Indigenous candidates in future elections. The FNS commends candidates from all political parties who put their name forward for election in a desire to serve their communities.

We send our gratitude to all the outgoing Ministers and MLAs for their public service. We would in particular like to thank outgoing Minister of Finance Carole James, outgoing Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Scott Fraser and outgoing Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction Shane Simpson, for their many years of public service and dedication to addressing issues of great importance to First Nations.

– 30 –

The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

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