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FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

News Release

For Immediate Release
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JOINT STATEMENT FROM LEADERS OF THE FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT, BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS AND THE UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS CONGRATULATING PREMIER GORDON CAMPBELL ON HIS RE-ELECTION

Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver – British Columbia's First Nations leadership today congratulated Premier Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberal party on their electoral victory.

Mr. Campbell and his party have earned the trust and support of British Columbians to continue to govern the province.

We look forward to continue working in partnership with the Premier and his government on issues of common interest, particularly as the Premier and his government implement the Reconciliation and Recognition legislation.

We applaud the Premier for his vision and commitment as this is much needed and positive legislation. The legislation has been years in the making and fulfills commitments that the provincial government and First Nations entered into in 2005 through the New Relationship Agreement.

Fundamental to that relationship was a new era of co-operation where Aboriginal title and rights are recognized; where each other's laws and responsibilities are respected; where both Aboriginal and Crown titles and jurisdictions are reconciled.

Not only will the legislation provide for the recognition of Aboriginal rights and title by the Province without requiring proof or strength of claim, it will help pave the way for long-term economic certainty and stability, based on sustainable practices and joint decision making.

The legislation will also establish mechanisms for shared decision making in regard to planning, management and tenuring decisions over lands and resources.

Another benefit of the legislation is that it will facilitate and lead to the completion of revenue and benefit sharing agreements between First Nations and the Province.

The legislation will also facilitate the re-building of Indigenous Nations and will make it clear that First Nations and not the Province will be responsible for and determining what constitutes an Indigenous Nation.

We must remember that the legislation will not change the past, but it will create a better future by allowing us to move away from systemic, institutionalized denial of Aboriginal rights to full recognition of those rights in law.

We are confident the election of Premier Campbell and his government will make that goal a reality.

The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

The Council works together to politically represent the interests of First Nations in British Columbia and develop strategies and actions to bring about significant and substantive changes to government policy that will benefit all First Nations in British Columbia.

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