



# FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT WELCOMES RE-AFFIRMATION OF RECOGNITION AND RECONCILIATION IN TSILHQOT'IN DECISION**

Coast Salish Territory (Vancouver, BC) – The First Nations Summit fully welcomes today's decision in *Tsilqot'in Nation v. British Columbia*. In his decision, Justice Vickers found that Aboriginal title does exist in the Tsilqo'tin territory and strongly urged the parties to reach an honourable resolution and reconciliation.

"In his thoughtful ruling, Justice Vickers has issued a warning to federal and provincial governments that they cannot take an impoverished view of Aboriginal title," said Grand Chief Edward John, member of the First Nations Summit political executive. "Thanks to the courage of Chief Roger William and the Tsilhqot'in people, this decision will assist all BC First Nations in their efforts to achieve reconciliation. It is unfortunate that some of the Tsilhqot'in Elders are no longer with us to share in this significant decision."

"Justice Vickers is absolutely correct in stating that reconciliation should not be a front for assimilation. Federal and provincial governments must accept that respect and recognition of First Nations peoples is fundamental to reconciling Aboriginal title with the assumed sovereignty of the Crown," added Chief John.

Brought to the courts by Chief Roger William on behalf of all Xeni Gwet'in and Tsilhqot'in people, this action sought declarations of Aboriginal title to part of the Cariboo-Chilcotin region of British Columbia. The trial commenced in Victoria in November 1992 and included 339 trial days at a cost of over \$30 million.

"We fully concur with Justice Vickers that it would be tragic if reconciliation were further postponed through seemingly endless and costly appeals," said Chief Judith Sayers, also a member of the First Nations Summit Political Executive. "We are ready and willing to work with the federal and provincial governments to improve negotiations mandates and processes in order to achieve just, honourable and timely reconciliation by this generation of Canadians."

First Nations will now be taking time to review and discuss the implications of the decision.

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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](http://www.fns.bc.ca).

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