



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

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First Nations Summit welcomes independent report on forestry agreements with the provincial government

COAST SALISH TERRITORY/VANCOUVER, B.C. – The First Nations Summit is pleased by today's release of the report, *True Partners: Charting a New Deal for BC, First Nations and the Forests We Share*, prepared by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

"The report is a timely public policy initiative that should go a long way toward educating the public on Forest and Range Opportunities agreements between First Nations and the provincial government," said Dave Porter, a member of the First Nations Summit's political executive. "Moreover, it should add momentum to the provincial government's current course of improving relations with First Nations on forestry and land use matters."

The report examines Forest and Range Opportunities agreements, which have been signed between the provincial government and approximately 130 First Nations. It finds that the per-capita formula employed by the province to calculate timber and cash to First Nations through these agreements is "fundamentally flawed" and must be reworked to provide lasting social, economic and environmental benefit.

"The current valuation process fails to compensate First Nations for the resources extracted from their territories," said Dave Porter, "An improved formula must be based on recognition of First Nations title and rights."

"We have worked diligently with the provincial government to ensure consistency between the New Relationship and the provisions of Forest and Range Opportunities Agreements," said Chief Judith Sayers, also a member of the First Nations Summit political executive. "We must now work together to ensure that these agreements are also economically viable in terms of the benefits they provide. Strengthening the economies of First Nations will be of benefit to the province as a whole, and we encourage the provincial government to seriously consider the recommendations contained in the report."

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

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