



# FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT CALLS ON GOVERNMENTS TO MAINTAIN MORATORIUMS ON OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION**

North Vancouver, BC — Leaders of the First Nations Summit are urging the provincial and federal governments to maintain their respective moratoriums on offshore oil and gas exploration in BC following today's report from the Offshore Oil and Gas Scientific Panel.

Coastal First Nations are extremely concerned about potential impacts within their traditional territories resulting from offshore oil and gas exploration. "First Nations hold aboriginal rights and title to the sea-bed and subsoil off the coast of British Columbia," said Gerald D. Wesley, a member of the Summit's political executive and Chief Negotiator for the Tsimshian Nation.

"We will not agree with the lifting of the moratoriums unless there is an independent assessment completed that addresses the environmental, legal, economic and cultural impacts of offshore oil and gas exploration and development."

Many coastal and inland First Nations are particularly concerned with potential impacts to marine resources, especially BC's fragile salmon and groundfish stocks. "The west coast fishery is already in an extremely delicate state. The federal and provincial governments' first priority must be the protection of this already fragile resource," said Wesley.

Wesley also stated that First Nations will seek planning, economic, and commercial opportunities resulting from any oil and gas development which may occur if all environmental and social issues are addressed.

The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in the treaty negotiation process in British Columbia. Background information on the Summit may be found at [www.fns.bc.ca](http://www.fns.bc.ca).

-30-

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