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## ***News Release***

### **BC First Nations Leadership Council Joins with Premier Gordon Campbell and the entire Legislative Assembly of BC in an Urgent call for Federal Government Financial Support for Kelowna Accord Commitments**

***For Immediate Release:***

***May 4, 2006***

Coast Salish Territory (West Vancouver) — The BC First Nations Leadership Council joined with Premier Gordon Campbell and the BC Government today in calling on Prime Minister Stephen Harper to live up to the financial commitments contained in the Kelowna Accord in order to address the critical socio-economic and infrastructure gaps suffered by First Nations.

The First Nations Leadership Council members were present in the BC Legislature today when a Special Statement on the New Relationship with Aboriginal People was tabled by Premier Campbell. The statement reaffirmed the BC Government's commitment to the implementation of the *Kelowna Accord* and *BC Transformative Change Accord*. The statement also calls on the federal government to make available the long term financial resources necessary to uphold the honour of the Crown in addressing the disparate socio-economic conditions faced by First Nations.

The BC First Nations Leadership Council released the attached open letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, The Hon. Jim Flaherty, Minister of Finance and The Hon. Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The letter is in direct response to this week's Federal Budget announcement which has provided a clear indication that the federal government is **not** willing to address the third world living conditions in Aboriginal communities by funding the commitments contained in the Kelowna Accord.

The First Nations Leadership Council's open letter to Prime Minister Harper makes the following recommendations:

- Your government uphold the honour of the Crown and fulfill the commitments made by Canada, provinces, territories and Aboriginal organizations made in the *Kelowna Accord*.
- Your government amend the 2006 federal budget to include, at a minimum, the financial commitments set out in the *Kelowna Accord* (see enclosure);
- A First Ministers' Meeting on Aboriginal Issues be convened to address First Nations-Crown relations, fiscal imbalances faced by First Nations governments, Aboriginal and treaty rights in Canada, and federal government responsibilities and legal obligations to provide services to First Nations peoples;
- First Nations/Aboriginal peoples be fully represented in the federal/provincial/territorial Finance Ministers' meeting to be held in the spring to consult on the federal government's discussion paper, *Restoring Fiscal Balance in Canada*,
- The full involvement and representation of Aboriginal peoples at the First Ministers' Meeting to be held in the fall.

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

**For more information:**

Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC	(250) 490-5314
Grand Chief Edward John, FNS	(604) 219-1705
Heather Gillies, BC AFN	(604)837-6908



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May 4, 2006

Right Honourable Stephen Harper  
Prime Minister of Canada  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Hon. Jim Flaherty  
Minister of Finance  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Hon. Jim Prentice  
Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Honourable Ministers,

The BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and Union of BC Indian Chiefs – together representing 203 First Nations in British Columbia and approximately 1/3 of the First Nations in Canada – are extremely disappointed with your government's commitments to Aboriginal peoples in the 2006 federal budget. Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development made many public commitments to “put wheels on the Kelowna Accord,” and yet, your government has chosen not to uphold the honour of the Crown. Your government has reneged on this historic multi-government agreement, and has proceeded to unilaterally implement its own plan to address our issues without any consultations with us.

For the past two years, Aboriginal issues have finally been an important priority on the national agenda, including a First Ministers' Meeting on Aboriginal Issues, which resulted in a significant ten-year plan to address the third world conditions in our communities. In this budget and recent Throne Speech, it is clear that Aboriginal issues are not a priority for your government.

The funds announced in your budget will do very little to remedy chronic under-funding or the crushing poverty and appalling socio-economic conditions of First Nations communities. True recognition, reconciliation and social justice with respect to lands, territories and resources, as well as and social and economic programs, are becoming even more distant goals.

Contrary to what your government has publicly indicated, the previous federal government confirmed that it had “booked” the Kelowna financial commitments in its fiscal framework. These were targeted to address critical socio-economic and infrastructure gaps as identified in the *Kelowna Accord*. The *Kelowna Accord* was the result of a collaborative process among the Government of Canada, provincial and territorial governments, and Aboriginal organizations across Canada, over the course of many months, to set out a long-term action plan to close the gap in standards of living of Aboriginal peoples. Your government has abandoned this Accord and your budget reflects only a fraction of the financial commitments *already* committed by the Government of Canada to help improve the quality of life for First Nations and Aboriginal Canadians.

Your government has committed to addressing the fiscal imbalance with the provinces, yet this budget does nothing to address the fiscal imbalance faced by First Nations governments. Spending on First Nations programs has been capped at 2% for the past ten years, and is far outpaced by rapid population growth and rising costs. Furthermore, the federal government has continued to offload both services and service delivery responsibilities to First Nations governments without requisite financial supports. We note also the commitment to offload services to provincial governments without consultation with, or the consent of, those governments or First Nations.

The federal government stated its intent to consult with provinces, territories and Aboriginal leaders to “develop a new approach”. The BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and Union of BC Indian Chiefs support the “new approach” that was jointly developed over many months with provincial and federal governments, which culminated in the *Kelowna Accord*. In fact, in British Columbia, we have already created this new approach through the signing of the *Transformative Change Accord* by the Government of Canada, the Province of British Columbia and BC First Nations (represented by the BC Assembly of First Nations, the First Nations Summit, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs).

Your government has stated that its new Aboriginal policy is to be based on “accountability and taking responsibility”. We strongly suggest that your government do the same, and uphold the honour of the Crown by fulfilling its commitments in the *Kelowna Accord*, and work with us in British Columbia to implement these commitments through the *Transformative Change Accord*.

The BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit and Union of BC Indian Chiefs recommend the following:

- Your government uphold the honour of the Crown and fulfill the commitments made by Canada, provinces, territories and Aboriginal organizations made in the *Kelowna Accord*.
- Your government amend the 2006 federal budget to include, at a minimum, the financial commitments set out in the *Kelowna Accord* (see enclosure);
- A First Ministers’ Meeting on Aboriginal Issues be convened to address First Nations-Crown relations, fiscal imbalances faced by First Nations governments, Aboriginal and treaty rights in Canada, and federal government responsibilities and legal obligations to provide services to First Nations peoples;

- First Nations/Aboriginal peoples be fully represented in the federal/provincial/territorial Finance Ministers' meeting to be held in the spring to consult on the federal government's discussion paper, *Restoring Fiscal Balance in Canada*,
- The full involvement and representation of Aboriginal peoples at the First Ministers' Meeting to be held in the fall.

We await your positive response to this letter.

Yours truly,

**FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

**On behalf of the FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT:**



Grand Chief Edward John



Grand Chief Doug Kelly

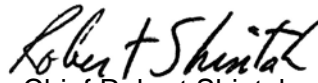


Dave Porter

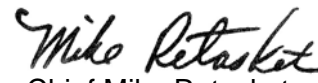
**On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS**



Chief Stewart Phillip



Chief Robert Shintah



Chief Mike Retasket

**On behalf of the BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS:**



Regional Chief A-in-chut (Shawn Atleo)

Encl.

cc. Hon. Gordon Campbell, Premier of British Columbia  
 Hon. Carole Taylor, Minister of Finance  
 Hon. Tom Christensen, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation  
 Carole James, Leader of the Opposition  
 Bill Graham, Leader of the Opposition  
 Jack Layton, New Democratic Party Leader  
 Gilles Duceppe, Bloc Quebecois Party Leader  
 Anita Neville, Liberal Critic – Indian Affairs and Northern Development  
 Dick Harris, BC Conservative Party Caucus Chair  
 Jean Crowder, NDP Critic – Indian Affairs and Northern Development  
 Marc Lemay, BQ Critic – Indian Affairs and Northern Development  
 National Chief Phil Fontaine, Assembly of First Nations  
 Jose Kusugak, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami  
 Clément Chartier, Métis National Council  
 Patrick Brazeau, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples  
 Beverly Jacobs, President, Native Women's Association of Canada  
 Hon. Ralph Klein, Premier of Alberta

Hon. Lorne Calvert, Premier of Saskatchewan  
Hon. Gary Doer, Premier of Manitoba  
Hon. Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario  
Hon. Jean Charest, Premier of Quebec  
Hon. Danny Williams, Premier of Newfoundland/Labrador  
Hon. Patrick Binns, Premier of Prince Edward Island  
Hon. Rodney MacDonald, Premier of Nova Scotia  
Hon. Bernard Lord, Premier of New Brunswick  
Hon. Dennis Fentie, Premier of Yukon Territory  
Hon. Joe Handley, Premier of the Northwest Territories

**FIRST MINISTERS` MEETING WITH NATIONAL ABORIGINAL LEADERS  
FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS**

	\$ Million					
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-2010	2010-2011	Total
<b><u>Education</u></b>						
K to 12 on reserve	25.0	141.0	227.0	296.0	361.0	1050.0
K to 12 non reserve	5.0	31.0	36.0	39.0	39.0	150.0
Post Secondary Education	50.0	75.0	125.0	125.0	125.0	500.0
Children	15.0	17.0	20.0	24.0	24.0	100.0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>95.0</b>	<b>264.0</b>	<b>408.0</b>	<b>484.0</b>	<b>549.0</b>	<b>1800.0</b>
<b><u>Housing and Infrastructure</u></b>						
On-reserve (for market and assisted housing)	200.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	600.0
Non reserve Housing	100.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	300.0
Northern Housing Partnerships	100.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	300.0
Water and Other Infrastructure	100.0	75.0	75.0	75.0	75.0	400.0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>500.0</b>	<b>275.0</b>	<b>275.0</b>	<b>275.0</b>	<b>275.0</b>	<b>1600.0</b>
<b><u>Relationships and Accountability</u></b>						
Policy Capacity of Aboriginal Organizations	12.0	18.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	90.0
Indicators and Accountability	20.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	19.0	60.0
Engagement on Land Claim and Self-Government Rights	7.5	7.5	5.0			20.0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>39.5</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>32.0</b>	<b>27.0</b>	<b>39.0</b>	<b>170.0</b>
<b><u>Economic Opportunities</u></b>						
FNCIDA	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	12.0
Economic Development Framework Initiatives	37.6	37.6	37.6	37.6	37.6	188.0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>200.0</b>
<b><u>Health</u></b>						
Stabilizing the First Nation and Inuit Health System	70.0	140.0	220.0	220.0	220.0	870.0
Promoting transformation/Building Capacity	67.0	78.0	89.0	100.0	111.0	445.0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>137.0</b>	<b>218.0</b>	<b>309.0</b>	<b>320.0</b>	<b>331.0</b>	<b>1315.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>811.5</b>	<b>829.5</b>	<b>1064.0</b>	<b>1146.0</b>	<b>1234.0</b>	<b>5085.0</b>