



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

First Nations Summit insists on a return to substantive good faith treaty negotiations following conclusion of the flawed referendum process

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NORTH VANCOUVER – Leaders of the First Nations Summit are insisting that the province return to active good faith treaty negotiations following today's conclusion of the provincial referendum on treaty negotiations.

"A substantive majority of more than 1.5 million British Columbians chose to boycott or spoil their referendum ballot. This clearly shows most British Columbians saw this for the ill conceived and flawed process it was. No matter what the results are, they do not represent the views of the majority", said Herb George, a member of the First Nations Summit political executive. "First Nations in the treaty process are committed to negotiating fair, honourable and timely treaties as a means of reconciling Aboriginal and Crown title in BC. We expect the provincial, as well as federal, government to show the same level of commitment with a return to substantive negotiations immediately".

The Summit saw the referendum as a stalling tactic by the provincial government to try and impose their limited views at treaty tables on issues such as self-government and taxation. First Nations are committed to upholding the principles of good faith negotiations whereby each party has the right to bring any issues to the table for negotiation rather than having them imposed through undemocratic processes. However, the inherent right to self-government is a fundamental underpinning of the treaty negotiation process and First Nations will not be subjected to negotiating away this right, which is affirmed in Section 35.1 of the Constitution (1982) and various court decisions.

"Let us be clear that the First Nations Summit has been and will continue to be committed to a process of negotiation that will ultimately result in modern day treaties that will benefit all British Columbians. However the only way this can be achieved is if issues are placed on the negotiating table without strings or limitations attached", said Lydia Hwitsum, another member of the First Nations Summit political executive. "Let's now place the referendum where it belongs – in the mirror behind us, never to be forgotten as a blight on our history and a reason for a year being wasted at the negotiation table. Together, we now must get back to effective good faith treaty negotiations immediately for the good of First Nations and British Columbians alike".

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.

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