



## FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

# NEWS RELEASE

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### **First Nations Summit Concerned with Provincial Cuts to Treaty Negotiation Budget**

North Vancouver, BC – Cuts to the provincial treaty negotiation budget run are an unfortunate sign of the low priority the provincial government has placed on resolving treaties in good faith, according to leaders of the First Nations Summit.

“A 20 million-dollar cut and 33% staff reduction to the BC treaty negotiation budget is an unfortunate indicator of the low priority being placed on treaty negotiations by the current provincial government”, said Grand Chief Edward John, a member of the Summit’s political executive.

“The courts have told the provincial government to negotiate in good faith, but cutting back on meaningful treaty negotiations is a step backward,” he added.

“We believe that these cuts hurt rather than help the government’s fiscal and economic goals,” he said. “New investment and job creation depend on our ability to quickly and fairly resolve treaties.”

While the Throne Speech spoke of reaching out to aboriginal people, the cuts to social programs would seem to contradict that pledge.

“Many aboriginal people in British Columbia are in high-risk social and economic categories and the budget did not address their needs.”

First Nations people are the fastest growing component of BC’s labour force and currently its most disadvantaged. The budget contains no strategy for

lowering income assistance dependency, raising productivity or reducing First Nations unemployment.

This Budget targets 300 training opportunities for “Aboriginal citizens” and the creation of only 350 jobs. This is far short of the need.

The budget shows some commitment in the area of revenue sharing. However, if British Columbia is seeking to achieve certainty over rights to lands and resources, First Nations must have certainty over revenue sharing arrangements.

“This budget is sadly lacking in resources and any specifics on how the lives of First Nations people can be improved. With any hope, there will be more detail in the various ministerial service plans,” said Chief John.

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).

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