

First Nations Summit

MEDIA RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
MAY 11, 2017**

Indigenous issues to play a key role in any new provincial government

Coast Salish Territory, Vancouver, British Columbia – Leaders of the First Nations Summit (FNS) are eagerly awaiting the final outcome of the 2017 provincial election, pending results of recounts on close races as well as the counting of absentee ballots, which will ultimately decide who will form government for the next term.

What is certain for the First Nations Summit is that Indigenous issues must be at the forefront of issues for whoever governs this province, whether it be by majority, minority or coalition.

Quotes:

Robert Phillips, FNS Political Executive

“Although the outcome of the provincial election remains uncertain, one certainty is that Indigenous issues must be at the forefront of the new government’s agenda. Prior to the election, the First Nations Summit sought commitments from each of the political parties on their support for the fair and just settlement of treaties in BC. We have been encouraged by the commitments provided in writing by the BC Liberals and the BC Green Party as well as the verbal commitments provided by John Horgan, Leader of the BC NDP, at the February 2107 First Nations Summit meeting.”

Cheryl Casimer, FNS Political Executive

“As we have stated to each of the political parties, First Nations-Crown treaty negotiations in BC must continue to be a made-in-BC process to reflect the unique requirements and interests of First Nations in this province, and any new government must commit to providing provincial representatives with comprehensive mandates that will overcome any barriers to best support efforts to address substantive treaty negotiations challenges on a priority basis.”

“We look forward to engaging with the new government as soon as possible to discuss how we can work collaboratively with Canada to find common ground as we move forward to address the outstanding land question in BC, seeking full recognition of Aboriginal and Treaty rights and title.”

Grand Chief Edward John, FNS Political Executive

“We have a great opportunity to continue down a path towards reconciliation and the continuing development of our renewed relationship. At the forefront of these efforts must be the implementation the UN *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This work will provide a basis for our collective efforts to ensure First Nations jurisdiction and rights are recognized in areas such as Education, Child Welfare, natural resource and wildlife management, environmental conservation and other substantive issues.”



The First Nations Summit congratulates all of the successful candidates in the 2017 provincial election as well as all those who put their names forward for election. In particular, we congratulate the four successful Indigenous candidates, Melanie Mark and Carole James (BCNDP), Ellis Ross, (BC Liberals) and Adam Olsen (BC Green Party). Their voices will be an important part of the dialogue moving forward.

-30-

Background

The First Nations Summit remains committed to advocating for the just and fair settlement of treaties in British Columbia and recently sent correspondence to the BC Liberals, BC Green Party and BC NDP to seek their commitments on this important issue. Copies of the responses from the BC Liberals and BC Green Party can be downloaded at www.fns.bc.ca.

The First Nations Leadership Council (Executives of the First Nations Summit, BC Assembly of First Nations and Union of BC Indian Chiefs) is committed to changing the course of First Nation-Crown relations in BC in a way that empowers First Nations and results in real, concrete change to our children, families, and communities. The FNLC has identified the upcoming provincial election as a critical turning point in which First Nation voters have the potential to significantly shift not only the focus of the election but the outcome as well. As a key part of this strategy, the FNLC posed a series of questions on issues of extreme importance to First Nations in BC. The questions as well as the responses from the BC Liberals, BC NDP and BC Green Party can also be downloaded at www.fns.bc.ca.

The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. The Summit is also a NGO in Special Consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

For further information: Colin Braker, Communications Director, FNS
Phone: 604-926-9903