

First Nations Summit

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NEWS RELEASE

Cheryl Casimer, Robert Phillips and Hugh Braker acclaimed to First Nations Summit Political Executive

Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver –Cheryl Casimer, Robert Phillips and Hugh Braker have been acclaimed to the First Nations Summit (FNS) Political Executive by leaders representing First Nations currently engaged in the treaty negotiations process in BC who are gathered in Vancouver for the June 2022 First Nations Summit Chiefs Assembly.

Cheryl Casimer will be serving her fourth term as a member of the FNS political executive. She is a citizen of the Ktunaxa Nation and currently resides in the community of ʔaqam (St. Mary's Band) which is located in the southeastern corner of BC. Ms. Casimer is a former Chief and Councillor of ʔaqam First Nation and a former Co-Chair of the First Nations Summit. She is a longstanding advocate for closing the socio-economic gaps faced by First Nations communities and is committed to building better bridges of understanding between neighboring cultures.

Robert Phillips will be serving his fourth term as a member of the FNS political executive. Phillips is a member of the Northern Secwepemc te Qelmucw (Shuswap) of the Canim Lake First Nation. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University College of the Fraser Valley. Phillips previously served three terms as a Commissioner of the BC Treaty Commission. He also previously served as Chief Negotiator and prior to that as Self-Government Director at the Northern Shuswap Tribal Council from 1998-2007.

Hugh Braker, QC, is a former Chief Councillor of the Tseshaht First Nation in Port Alberni, which is one of fourteen Nuu-chah-nulth tribes on the west coast of Vancouver Island. This will be his first term on the FNS Political Executive. Mr. Braker practiced law for over 25 years. He is the current Chair of the First Nations Fisheries Council and current President of the Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of BC.

The FNS Political Executive also serve with the Regional Chief of the BC Assembly of First Nations and the Executive of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, on the First Nations Leadership Council.

Leah George-Wilson of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Ray Harris of Stz'uminus First Nation were also acclaimed as Co-Chairs of the First Nations Summit. This will be Ms. George-Wilson's eighth term and Mr. Harris' sixth term as Co-chair. The Co-Chairs are responsible for chairing First Nations Summit meetings as well as the Summit's administration and day-to-day operations.

The First Nations Summit Chiefs gave words of praise for outgoing political executive member Chief Lydia Hwitsum, who did not stand for re-election. Chief Hwitsum will be prioritizing her time working for her community as the newly elected Chief of Cowichan Tribes.

-30-

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.

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