

# FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

## News Release

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### First Nations Leadership Council Alarmed by Public Official's Denigration of Tla'amin Language and Culture

(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), sḵw̓xwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) The First Nations Leadership Council was alarmed to hear a live broadcast where a Powell River elected official demeaned Tla'amin First Nation peoples by mocking their language and cultural identity. This is another demonstration "caught on tape" of a racist and cowardly act towards not just Tla'amin people, but all First Nations across the country.

"Sadly, these ignorant and bombastic acts of racism, that occur everyday, have become acceptable in today's society and results in the normalization of casual racism," said Grand Chief Stewart Philip, President, UBCIC "To see this cartoonish display of ignorance by an elected official without censure from his Council is deeply disturbing."

Three years ago, Tla'amin Nation requested that the city to remove the name "Powell" from the town. The town Powell River is named after Israel Wood Powell - BC's First Superintendent of Indian Affairs responsible for many harmful colonial policies including expansion of Indian residential schools and banning of the potlatch.

"First Nations placenames are thousands of years old, beautiful and deeply meaningful. They are also a reminder that we as First Nations have always been here and are the original peoples. This is a fact that some cannot accept or would rather forget," said Regional Chief Terry Teegee of the BC Assembly of First Nations. "There is a Jim Palm in every town across BC and for this reason we urge the Union of BC Municipalities to engage anti-racism education and training for all of its members."

"The FNLC calls on the City of Powell River to address the situation and put a put an end to these disrespectful bullying tactics carried out in public meetings with no shame or remorse from these decision-makers, as well as sees a key role for the Province of BC: "We hold up the leadership displayed by Tla'amin Nation on this issue that many of our Nations are working tirelessly to advance," added Cheryl Casimer of the First Nations Summit Political Executive. "We call on the Province of BC to work in partnership with First Nations to accelerate the commitment in the Declaration Act Action Plan to review the principles and processes that guide the naming of municipalities and regional districts and evolve practices to foster reconciliation in local processes."

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*The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN), First Nations Summit (FNS), and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC).*

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