

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

News Release

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John Rustad's Interview with Jordan Peterson Another Example of BC Conservatives Taking Aim at Indigenous Rights and Reconciliation

(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətał (Tseil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) Earlier this week, BC Conservative Party leader John Rustad gave a lengthy [interview](#) to notorious right-wing podcaster Jordan Peterson where Mr. Peterson suggested that Indigenous governments can't be trusted- the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) is asking why Mr. Rustad is aligning himself with those views.

In the interview, Jordan Peterson discusses band corruption with Mr. Rustad and says, "this is another nest of snakes that Canadians won't catch because they're afraid of being branded, let's say racist."

Chief Don Tom, UBCIC Vice-President and Chief of Tsartlip First Nation, stated "We are sick and tired of Mr. Rustad throwing Indigenous people under the bus to gain political advantage. To participate in a conversation on whether Indigenous governments have any relation to Indigenous land title is insulting, offensive and perpetuates racist stereotypes."

Mr. Rustad made inflammatory, ignorant, and inherently false comments to Mr. Peterson, including characterizing the Province's efforts with First Nations as "a direct assault on private property rights". This is one of numerous actions and statements from the BC Conservative Party that are antithetical to reconciliation. For example, a current BC conservative candidate tweeted in July 2023 that "Indigenous people having a higher incarceration rate doesn't necessarily mean there are systemic biases against them in the justice system. They could just, you know, commit more crimes. Like Black people in the US." In April 2024, another BC Conservative candidate, in expressing opposition to the recognition of Haida title, tweeted that while Indigenous peoples "did lose ownership and control of these lands to Great Britain...[they] got something in return...The wheel, the lightbulb, the microchip..."

Regional Chief Terry Teegee, BC Assembly of First Nations, stated, "Such attitudes demonstrate a profound lack of understanding of the history and impacts of colonization, and its enduring legacy, and will not lead to reconciliation. My relationship with John Rustad goes back over a decade to when I was the Tribal Chair for the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, and from that time he has refused to recognize our inherent title and rights. In April 2024, Mr. Rustad stood up in the legislature, with the Haida present, and stated his support for the recognition of Haida Nation title through legislation. Not long afterwards, he attacked the legislation on video while outside of the legislature."

Robert Phillips, First Nations Summit Executive, stated "In the same interview, Mr. Rustad said he will end school 'indoctrination' and eliminate the carbon tax which is a 'vain attempt to change the weather', and challenges solar panels, wind generators and heat pumps, suggesting a return to nuclear power is needed. We are deeply concerned with these radical political positions which threaten to undermine the welfare of all British Columbians and drive BC further towards Trump-style US politics."



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Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President, concluded “As a Great Grandfather, I urge all British Columbians to pay attention. John Rustad has proven himself to be supportive of bizarre wingnut conspiracy theories. He has on many occasions shamelessly displayed his contempt for any notion of human and Indigenous rights. His world economic view is ‘drill baby, drill’ and ‘dig baby, dig.’ Our beautiful pristine environment and our children and grandchildren do not deserve the legacy of a destructive and regressive John Rustad government. Vote for your grandkids. Vote for reconciliation.”

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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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