

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

News Release

September 30, 2024

Rustad's Indigenous Platform Doubles Down on His Dangerous Commitment to Repeal Indigenous Human Rights

(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətał (Tseil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) Today, Mr. Rustad committed once again to pull the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act) if elected.

The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) is astounded that Mr. Rustad chose to announce his continued crusade to repeal the Declaration Act on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation of all days. This "plan" will set us back decades and will continue to pit First Nations against other British Columbians. This is not leadership. The FNLC notes that Mr. Rustad's platform includes a number of things the Eby government is already working to do: loan guarantees for equity in natural resource projects; capacity building; treatment and recovery services; transferring authority over child welfare services. It also includes a commitment to "strategic land return to First Nations" and returning 20% of BC's forests to FN to manage, despite the current government having already transferred over 20% of forestry tenure to First Nations and set up collaborative planning through forest landscape planning tables.

The FNLC is extremely concerned by John Rustad's ongoing efforts to pit British Columbians against each other- he showed this with the Haida title bill when he spoke in favour of the bill and then turned around and voted against it. The FNLC stresses that the recent years have included extremely hard work by First Nations and the government to make progress based on cooperation and working together. We've moved forward on title recognition, revenue sharing, child and family services, housing on reserve and in many other ways. We can't go backwards and undo the Declaration Act, which underpins our current work, and the years of progress we have made together.

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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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