

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

News Release

October 16, 2024

FNLCL Condemns BC Conservative's Party Platform Budget

(X̱m̱əθḵw̱əy̱əm (Musqueam), Sḵw̱x̱w̱ú7mesh (Squamish) and səliiwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) British Columbians stand at a critical juncture with only four days remaining until the Provincial Election. The recently released costed platform from the BC Conservative Party raises serious concerns regarding its implications for First Nations, particularly John Rustad's proposed \$10 million budget towards economic reconciliation. This token commitment falls drastically short of what is needed to advance meaningful reconciliation efforts with First Nations.

The significant resource development goals including mining, forestry and LNG development proposed by the BC Conservative Party, require the free, prior, and informed consent of rights and title holders—rights that are deeply rooted in our unceded territories.

"The BC Conservative Party's proposed expedition mining approvals and extraction undermine the outcomes of *Gitxaala v. British Columbia*," stated BCAFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee. "The courts were clear: we need a system that respects First Nations' rights and engages us as equal partners in decision-making processes. Anything less than this commitment not only undermines the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* but also BC Supreme Court decisions that have directed the Province of BC to completely reform how the province achieves consent with First Nations."

"The unprecedented resource development that Mr. Rustad is proposing to undertake cannot be achieved without First Nations and without the full application of the UN Declaration. Mr. Rustad boasts of his track record as former Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation - yet the courts have determined that his approach and the legacy of his former party is a liability for all British Columbians and the antithesis to reconciliation. First Nations in this province deserve better. All British Columbians deserve better. We must ensure that the next elected government does better," stated Cheryl Casimer, First Nations Summit Political Executive.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs stated, "Mr. Rustad's costed platform, which was released after over 20% of the BC population has voted, proposes an \$11 billion deficit for the province, far exceeding the costed platforms of BCNDP and BC Green Party. Further, the increased revenue projects provide essentially no detail- where is the money coming from? The BC Conservative Party does not take leadership seriously, they do not take reconciliation seriously, and they clearly do not take fiscal responsibility seriously." Grand Chief Stewart Phillip concluded, "First Nations and all British Columbians have a choice to make on October 19th. We urge everyone to get out the vote and make your voice heard."

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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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