

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

News Release

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FNLC Questions Regressive, Conflated *Infrastructure Projects Act*; Alarmed by Province's Backsliding on Reconciliation Efforts

(*xʷməθkʷəy̓əm* (Musqueam), *sḵwx̱wú7mesh* (Squamish) and *səlilwətał* (Tseil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) is raising serious concerns about the Province's recently introduced and deeply problematic *Infrastructure Projects Act* (Bill 15) and is alarmed by the Province's continued backsliding on its reconciliation efforts, including substantive implementation of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act).

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President, stated, "In developing Bill 15 the Province conducted no meaningful consultation and cooperation with First Nations and did not adhere to its own [Interim Approach](#) on the Alignment of Laws (Interim Approach). While we support the Province taking action to counter Trump's erratic behaviour, such action must be principled, respect First Nations' basic human rights, and be done in consultation and cooperation with First Nations. We are deeply alarmed by the Province's continued backsliding on reconciliation."

Bill 15 has the potential to greatly impact First Nations' inherent and Aboriginal rights, title, and jurisdiction both in its application and its intended outcomes. As drafted, Bill 15 goes beyond expediting the approval and development of schools and hospitals and could result in major extractive projects being fast-tracked, contrary to the Province's constitutional, legislative, and environmental obligations and commitments, including those under the Declaration Act, the Interim Approach, and the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration).

BCAFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee, remarked, "Bill 15 is overreaching and enables the Province to bypass permitting processes and expedite environmental assessment for any project they deem a priority. The Province is ramming through Bill 15 without any First Nations input who stand to be adversely impacted. This law may breach constitutional consultation requirements and is not consistent with the UN Declaration."

"Bill 15 is the latest in a deeply troubling pattern for the Province of circumventing proper consultation and engagement with title and rights holders," stated Robert Phillips of the First Nations Summit Political Executive. He added, "Reconciliation and economic growth are not incompatible, they go hand in hand. If the Province chooses to neglect the former in a misguided attempt to advance the latter, it will quickly find itself mired in legal proceedings that benefit absolutely no one."

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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). <https://www.fnlc.ca/>

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