



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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News Release

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BCAFN Recognizes Earth Day, Calls for Relentless Determination to Restore Mother Earth

(Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George, BC) – In recognition of International Earth Day, the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) honours Mother Earth and calls upon citizens, institutions, and all levels of government to escalate efforts and urgently invest in evidence-based solutions to protect and restore our lands, waters, resources, and ecosystems for future generations.

“Our actions and inaction are driving the global community into a multifaceted crisis caused by global warming, pollution, loss of biodiversity, and an obsolete and inequitable economic system ill-suited to uphold human needs and well-being,” stated BCAFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee.

He continued, “Our governments’ current approach is insufficient. Atmospheric CO2 continues to surge, biodiversity is deteriorating at an alarming rate, and reckless industrial development and colossal levels of pollution and waste are destroying the very sources of water, food and resources required to sustain life on Mother Earth. Despite countless climate pledges and targets endorsed by governments worldwide, including Canada, First Nations peoples and communities face catastrophes threatening our ways of life and ancestral connections to our territories and food systems. Sadly, many of the so-called solutions being offered to us merely repeat the colonial patterns and status quo central to the foundation of this crisis.”

The Federal Budget for 2023 includes substantial investments in clean technology. However, the Budget disregards small, rural, and First Nations communities on the frontlines of multiple crises. This unjustifiable failure to support the most vulnerable peoples and communities in Canada means that most First Nations will not be able to obtain or develop the resources needed to prepare for and adapt to the devastating impacts of climate change. The BCAFN is doing our part. In partnership with the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) partner organizations, we proudly launch www.FNLCclimatestrategy.ca, showcasing our BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan (The Strategy). The Strategy outlines Four Pathways for climate action: Inherent Title and Rights, Capacity and Leadership, Land and Water Protection, Climate Response and Preparedness. Furthermore, each Pathway encompasses a set of themes, objectives, strategies and actions, and recommendations for implementation.

“The BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan is designed to assist First Nations peoples and communities in taking concrete steps toward the recognition and implementation of our inherent and protected Title and Rights in climate adaptation, mitigation and planning,” said Regional Chief Terry Teegee. “By creating a dynamic, accessible website, we strive to make the Strategy that much more accessible and applicable for First Nations looking to lead this important work in their communities and traditional territories,” he continued.

#honouringourancestors



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The BCAFN, in tandem with our FNLC partners, will engage First Nations across the province to implement this Strategy. During last year's All-Chief's meeting, First Nations leadership prioritized actions such as the development of a guide for communities to facilitate the application and integration of the Strategy in their initiatives, a First Nations capacity assessment report, and a discussion paper concerning the establishment of a First Nations Climate Fund to ensure communities have access to appropriate and long-term capacity funding.

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