

# FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL



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## News Release

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### **FNLC Congratulates Tahltan Central Government, Tahltan Nation, and the Province on Eskay Mine Decision, Emphasizes Importance of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act**

(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) congratulates the Tahltan Central Government (TCG), the Tahltan Nation, and the Province on making regulatory decisions on the reopening of the Eskay Creek gold-silver mine through the first-ever consent-based agreement under the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act).

This historic first demonstrates what can be accomplished when First Nation and Crown governments come together on a government-to-government basis to make decisions, and the important role the Declaration Act can play in facilitating growth and prosperity for the benefit of all who call B.C. home. The recognition of Tahltan's jurisdiction and decision-making authority in Tahltan Territory, and obtaining the TCG's consent, achieves the kind of certainty needed to attract investment and support sustainable development in this province, and ensures the local Nation participates in the associated benefits. The Declaration Act is not a problem to be fixed; it is an opportunity to be embraced. In the words of TCG President Kerry Carlick, it is not a "good idea to take anything away from [the Declaration Act]."

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President, stated, "The momentous accomplishment of TCG and the Province is further proof of what we have known to be true since the Declaration Act's unanimous passing in 2019: for any provincial government committed to implementing it as intended, the Declaration Act is a potent tool for progress and collective prosperity. It's time to stop the divisive and counter-productive fear mongering and to get on with implementing the Declaration Act, as written. A growing list of more than 80 First Nations and First Nation Organizations have endorsed a [joint statement](#) calling for the Declaration Act to be upheld as passed into legislation in 2019."

BC Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief Terry Teegee, remarked, "This achievement is an empowering precedent for all B.C. First Nations and the Province. It is concrete precedent that should be repeated throughout our Territories. It demonstrates that with respect of our Nations' jurisdictions and laws that we can deliver legal, economic, and investment certainty. Everything about us, with us. These regulatory decisions and Section 7 agreements, and the Impact Benefit Agreements with proponents are exactly what the Declaration Act was intended to uplift. This achievement should also silence false narratives that the Declaration Act is an obstacle to progressing resource development. With affected Nations treated as equal decision-makers, we all prosper and create an inspirational future for all generations."

"The mining industry is and will continue to be an important driver of B.C.'s economy, and many First Nations want to play a central role in it," stated Robert Phillips of the First Nations Summit Political Executive. He added, "the Declaration Act provides us with a principled framework to enable First Nations, the Province, and mining

proponents to work together to facilitate economic growth and secure economic independence while respecting the human rights of First Nations.”

*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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