



BRITISH COLUMBIA
ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

July 16, 2026

BC First Nations Chiefs and Leaders gather in Ottawa to attend AFN 47th Annual General Assembly: Upholding Rights, Empowering Nations

(Unceded Algonquin Nation territory– Ottawa, ON) – This week, Chiefs and leaders from British Columbia travelled to the Anishinàbe Algonquin Nation traditional and unceded territory/Ottawa, ON, to attend the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) 47th Annual General Assembly: Upholding Rights, Empowering Nations. Leaders and representatives discussed key issues, set priorities and made collective decisions that advance the rights, interests, and well-being of First Nations communities nationwide.

Chiefs unanimously passed an Emergency Resolution calling on Canada to uphold the truth of Indian Residential School Survivors and Witnesses and to criminalize Indian Residential School denialism as hate speech against First Nations people.

“Residential School denialism has deeply influenced BC politics and communities as it has deepened and amplified anti-Indigenous rhetoric to grow an environment of hate and intolerance. The tragic impact of this is re-traumatizing survivors and invalidating documented history,” states Regional Chief Terry Teegee. Further, “embracing the truth of residential school denialism would lead to increased reconciliation efforts, bring healing to survivors and their families and stronger and informed communities that can work to address systemic inequalities faced by First Nations’ communities.”

In addition, Chiefs and leaders declared a united resolve to oppose the Liberal government’s proposed reforms to streamline major project approvals if those reforms weaken environmental protections, undermine oversight, limit meaningful consultation, compress review timelines, or circumvent First Nations’ free, prior, and informed consent. As a result of these serious concerns, direct talks between First Nations leaders, provincial premiers, and the prime minister will take place on October 26th, 2026. More details will be available soon.

The event included prominent guest speakers such as Rebecca Alty, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, Tim Hodgson, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Dominic Leblanc, President of the King’s Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-US Trade, who shared updates on government-Indigenous relations, as well as Mandy Gull-Masty, Minister of Indigenous Services of Canada, Gary Anandasangaree, Minister of Public Safety, Rebecca Chartrand, Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs, and Buckley Belanger, Secretary of State (Rural Development). Each speaker provided important updates and insights on various aspects of government-First Nations relations and key policy areas.

Over the three days, a total of 39 resolutions were addressed. One resolution was deferred, and 38 resolutions were passed, many of which were adopted through omnibus baskets, reflecting a collective consensus to advance First Nations priorities in Canada.

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The British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) is a Provincial Territorial Organization (PTO) representing the 204



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First Nations in British Columbia. BCAFN representation is inclusive and extends to First Nations currently engaged in the treaty process, those who have signed modern treaties, and those who fall under historic treaty agreements, including the Douglas Treaties and Treaty 8.

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