



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

**June 6, 2019**

### **BCAFN REGIONAL CHIEF CONGRATULATES ELECTED FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT TASK GROUP AND CO-CHAIRS**

(Musqueam Territory, Vancouver, BC – June 6, 2019) – The First Nations Summit (FNS) held elections today for three positions in the FNS Task Group and two Co-Chairs. Regional Chief Terry Teegee congratulates re-elected members Cheryl Casimer and Robert Phillips, and newly elected member Lydia Hwitsum to the FNS Task Group; Regional Chief Teegee also congratulates the Co-Chairs Chief Leah George-Wilson, and Ray Harris who were acclaimed. The BCAFN also acknowledges Wade Grant and Wilf Adams for putting their names forward for the FNS Task Group. The FNS represents First Nations in BC that are involved in treaty negotiations and supports them by providing a forum to address issues related to these negotiations.

“I offer my heartfelt congratulations to Cheryl Casimer, Robert Phillips and Lydia Hwitsum. I look forward to continuing to advance First Nations interests in BC in collaboration as the First Nations Leadership Council,” stated BC Regional Chief Terry Teegee.

“I would like to express my deep gratitude to Akile Ch’oh, Grand Chief Edward John, who did not run for re-election as a member of the FNS Task Group. He has created a legacy within regional, national and international indigenous politics. I look forward to continuing working with Akile Ch’oh on various files as he continues to advocate and support indigenous peoples, including his people of the Tl’azt’en Nation,” stated Regional Chief Teegee.

Lydia Hwitsum, the newly elected member of the Task Group, is a member of the Cowichan Nation and has served as the elected Chief of the Cowichan Tribes for eight years. She was an elected member of the FNS political executive from 2002 to 2004 and served as a board member for the BCAFN, as well as a BC representative for the Assembly of First Nations National Women’s Council. Lydia Hwitsum is the principal for Hwitsum Consulting and was on the board of the First Nations Health Authority. She has more than twenty years of experience in leadership positions in Indigenous governance in British Columbia and across Canada.

Cheryl Casimer is a citizen of the Ktunaxa Nation and is from the community of ʔaąam, which is located near Cranbrook in the southeastern corner of BC. Ms. Casimer is a longstanding advocate for First Nations issues and perspectives, and is committed to building better bridges of understanding between neighboring cultures. Ms. Casimer is a former Chief and Councillor of the ʔaąam First Nation. She was also previously employed as the Director of Treaty, Lands & Resources for the Ktunaxa Treaty Council. Ms. Casimer has served on numerous boards and committees over the past 20 years, including one term as Co-Chair of the First Nations Summit (2002-2004) and one term as a board member of the BC Assembly of First Nations. She also previously served as a board member and President of the Ktunaxa Kinbasket Child and Family Services Society (KKCFSS).

#honouringourancestors



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Robert Phillips is a member of the Northern Secwepemc te Qelmuw (Shuswap) of the Canim Lake First Nation. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University College of the Fraser Valley. Phillips was previously elected by First Nations Summit delegates to three, two-year terms as a Commissioner of the British Columbia Treaty Commission (2007-2013). He also previously served as Chief Negotiator, and prior to that, as Self-Government Director at the Northern Shuswap Tribal Council (1998-2007). Mr. Phillips has an extensive background in aboriginal justice and economic development. Mr. Phillips was elected in June 2016 for a second consecutive three-year term on the First Nations Summit Task Group (political executive), which is mandated to carry out specific tasks related to Aboriginal Title and Rights negotiations with British Columbia and Canada and other issues of common concern to First Nations in British Columbia.

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For more information regarding the First Nations Summit visit [www.fns.bc.ca/](http://www.fns.bc.ca/)

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