



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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NEWS RELEASE

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BCAFN WELCOMES BC GOVERNMENT THRONE SPEECH 2021

(Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George, BC – Apr. 12, 2021) – The BC provincial government presented the annual throne speech with a list of priorities for the upcoming year, and which largely respond to the previous difficult year dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) welcomes a number of these commitments that will be advanced over the year as they respond to urgent issues and goals.

“First Nations are committed to bringing an end to the COVID-19 pandemic, as seen by the high response to the immunization rollout, and we are eager to be part of an economic reset. My expectation is that BC does not go back to the status quo as we rebuild the economy and social institutions. Fractures in our society have been revealed, such as growing inequalities and poverty, over the past year and a new effort must ensure that all people, including First Nations, have a real stake in the economy,” stated Regional Chief Terry Teegee.

BC Government key priorities include:

- provide new investments to boost digital connectivity in more rural communities, remote and First Nations communities,
- expand support for mental health care,
- address inequality and discrimination by building on work that was started before the pandemic. The plan also includes B.C.’s first anti-racism law, and reforms to the Police Act,
- and make BC more affordable with cuts to vehicle insurance, expand \$10-a-day child care and make investments in rental housing.

In addition, the BC Government has recommitted to reconciliation with BC First Nations and will continue to advance Indigenous rights as human rights through implementation of the Action Plan for Bill 41 – 2019: *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*. This work is done in collaboration with the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC).

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