



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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NEWS RELEASE

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On Earth Day, BCAFN Calls for Accelerated Support of First Nations Leadership to Address the Climate Crisis

(Lheidli T'enneh Territory – April 22, 2021) - In honour of Earth Day, the BC Assembly of First Nations calls for accelerated support of First Nations climate leadership. The effects of climate change are rapidly threatening our communities, our culture and our economies and pose a potentially irreversible threat to our waters, lands, air and oceans. First Nations are also a critical part of the solution, stewarding significant amounts of the carbon held in forests worldwide and protecting their territories and the biodiversity that depends on healthy lands and waters.

"As First Nations, we know that humans were blessed to be part of this incredible living system where everything is interconnected and interrelated. How Mother Earth behaves, impacts us; and how we behave, impacts Mother Earth. Our Elders remind us that we are here only as caretakers, and our responsibility is to take good care of our lands and waters" Regional Chief Terry Teegee stated.

During the beginning of the global pandemic, the world saw a significant shift in increased quality of air, water and non-human beings in conjunction with a massive decline in economic output. Regional Chief Teegee reflected on the impacts of the pandemic over the course of a year noting, "if we have learned any lessons after a year into the pandemic, it is that human health and Mother Earth's health are inextricably linked. This is a stark reminder that a low carbon economy is not only vital but that there is a distinct opportunity to shift gears while we reflect on our impacts on Mother Earth during this pandemic".

Climate change affects all populations across the globe, and now more than ever, there is both an urgent and historic opportunity to recognize First Nations inherent rights and elevate the vital role of First Nations leadership across BC and Canada. As inherent protectors of Mother Earth, First Nations must be supported in leading these initiatives to the success of global efforts to address climate change.

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