



NEWS RELEASE

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BCAFN WELCOMES CANADA'S FEDERAL BUDGET 2022 AND CALLS FOR ACTION ON ECONOMIC RECONCILIATION

(Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George, BC) – The federal budget released today continues the Canadian government's commitments to reconciliation and the serious and ongoing socio-economic issues experienced by First Nations. The government has acknowledged in this budget the significant hardships endured by Indigenous Peoples that have been exacerbated by climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. \$11 billion over six years will be invested into First Nations communities to strengthen, build, and control their own economies, infrastructures, social supports, and cultures. \$2.8 billion has been committed for this year. While the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) welcomes Canada's federal budget, the government must begin to work toward economic reconciliation that will guarantee predictable, fair, and stable revenue streams for First Nations communities.

"I am optimistic as the federal government keeps reconciliation and First Nations issues and concerns a priority in their budget with resources and supports provided," stated Regional Chief Terry Teegee. "However, it is imperative that commitments continue to grow and that they begin work toward economic reconciliation to create stability and independence for Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The current budgetary system maintains a balance of power that keeps Indigenous Peoples across Canada vulnerable to colonial policies, laws, and neglect as they live on their own lands.

\$6 billion will be spent over seven years for Indigenous housing, with and an additional \$300 million over five years to co-develop an "Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing strategy." In addition, the federal government pledged legislative changes that will be implemented to ensure the full implementation of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

"I would also like to see much stronger commitments and work by the federal government toward justice and policing issues. We must urgently reduce the overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in the prison system," added Regional Chief Terry Teegee. "First Nations continue to be mistreated and violently apprehended by police and many are forced through Canada's justice system and incarceration.

The federal government also committed financial resources toward the ongoing work and support on issues related to the Residential School system, Indigenous health and wellness, child and welfare, clean drinking water, and a promise that a "National Action Plan to End Gender-based violence" will be forthcoming.

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