



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

March 10, 2023

BCAFN Hosts 19th Annual Special Chiefs Assembly

(x^wməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Vancouver) – The BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) was pleased to host the 19th annual Special Chiefs Assembly (SCA) this week in the Musqueam First Nation. Chiefs, leaders, Knowledge Keepers, youth and community members joined in-person and online from all over the province to participate in discussions and decisions on critically important and urgent issues affecting their communities and traditional territories.

Representatives from both the federal and provincial governments, including Premier David Eby, Minister Patty Hajdu, Indigenous Services Canada, Parliamentary Secretary Julie Dabrusin, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Minister Murray Rankin, Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Minister Nathan Cullen, Water, Land and Natural Resources Stewardship, Minister Marc Miller, Indigenous Services of Canada, and Minister Jennifer Whiteside, Mental Health and Addictions provided updates on their work and the Chiefs-in-assembly were able to bring attention to urgent, in some cases long-standing, work that is needed to be done.

During the two-day meeting updates were provided on some of the many priority sectors including sex-based discrimination, First Nations languages, UNDRIP National Action Plan, policing and justice, First Nations Health Council, safe drinking water, forestry, children and families, emergency management and fisheries.

A total of fifteen resolutions were passed during the week all of which will direct the work of the BCAFN Regional Chief, board members, representatives and staff over the upcoming months and years.

“The *UN Declaration Act (Canada)* and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (BC)* have increased and intensified efforts to tackle critical issues as we work together with governments to start aligning laws and policies to the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*,” stated Regional Chief Terry Teegee. “The process must be a decolonizing approach that continues to put the lived experience, expertise and autonomy at the centre of discourse and drive social, political and economic change.”

“In addition, First Nations leaders continue to prioritize the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People National Action Plan” continued Regional Chief Teegee. “Transformative systemic changes that build on First Nations knowledge systems and laws and that are tracked and measured must urgently begin. Our future generations are counting on us.”

The Special Chiefs Assembly is a duly convened political meeting where BCAFN membership may determine the mandate and direction of the BCAFN.

Helpful links:

Agenda and meeting documents can be found on the BCAFN Events website: <https://events.bcafn.ca>

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