



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

**June 21, 2024**

### **BCAFN Celebrates National Indigenous Peoples Day and Calls for Meaningful Action**

**(Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George, BC)**—The BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) calls on all Canadians to join Indigenous Peoples across the country today to celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day at events that showcase Indigenous cultures, arts, music, dance, and traditions. This is an opportunity to learn and reflect on the challenges we as First Nations people face and celebrate our many diverse cultures, languages, and achievements.

“While we celebrate First Nations on this day, I encourage Canadians to approach this day with openness, respect and a willingness to listen to our voices and perspectives,” states Regional Chief Terry Teegee. “Embrace reconciliation, cooperation and partnership and walk with us on this important day, and every day, to strive for a more inclusive and equitable society.”

Reconciliation is of utmost importance to everyone in Canada as it signifies a commitment to healing, understanding, and transforming the relationship between First Nations and non-Indigenous peoples. The historical injustices, such as the legacy of residential schools, colonization, mistreatment, and systemic discrimination, have had profound and enduring impacts on First Nations communities. Many of these impacts persist in overrepresentation of Indigenous people in prisons, in higher rates of police violence, and continued higher rates of child apprehension. Reconciliation embodies the recognition of past wrongs, the acknowledgment of Indigenous rights, and a commitment to putting an end to inequality and ongoing injustice for First Nations peoples.

National Indigenous Peoples Day was recognized for the first time in Canada as National Aboriginal Day in 1996 following a recommendation of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples the year before. June 21st, the summer solstice, has been chosen as the day to honour the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. For many Indigenous cultures in Canada, this time holds deep cultural and spiritual significance, symbolizing renewal, growth, and connection to the land.

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