

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

News Release

March 25, 2024

FNLN Stands with the Haida Nation and Denounces Misleading and Factually Incorrect Statement by BC United Party

(xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) and səliiwətał (Tseil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLN) is deeply disappointed with a [statement](#) made on March 22nd by the B.C. United Party that politicizes the basic human rights of First Nations and mischaracterizes the Haida Title Land Agreement (Agreement).

The B.C. United Caucus' release of a "joint statement" on the Agreement is misleading and appears to be aimed at instilling fear and derailing a critically important milestone achieved by the Haida Nation and the Province. Contrary to the "joint statement", the Agreement is entirely consistent with Canada's ever-evolving constitutional framework and jurisprudence as they relate to the Crown-Indigenous relations and the rights of First Nations. It represents an innovative approach to advancing relations and reconciliation, balancing the interests of fee simple landowners on Haida Gwaii with the inherent and constitutionally protected title, rights, and jurisdiction of the Haida Nation, all with the express agreement and consent of the Haida Nation. The Agreement is progressive and will promote harmonious co-existence, partnership, and prosperity, and is a win for ALL British Columbians.

The B.C. United Party statement that the Agreement has the potential to infringe upon the rights of landowners is factually incorrect and ignores the [Province's background](#) which expressly states that private land will not be impacted. We are left to wonder if the B.C. United Party's failure to follow the facts, is a purposeful attempt to stir division within B.C., which would likely victimize First Nations people once again.

Among other things, the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, which was unanimously adopted by the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia in 2019, affirms the application of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) to the laws of British Columbia. Further, the Supreme Court of Canada has clearly and repeatedly called on the Crown to negotiate with First Nations to reconcile their rights and interests with those of the broader public. The Agreement represents a genuine and earnest attempt to do just that in relation to the interests of the Crown, the Haida Nation, and all those who have made Haida Gwaii their home.

Rather than seeking to deny First Nations our most basic human rights, in clear violation of domestic and international law, we encourage all British Columbians to stand with us in celebrating the current provincial government and the Haida Nation's tremendous accomplishment.

This Agreement will bring certainty to British Columbia in the place of litigation, protests and uncertainty. It allows all British Columbians, and not just large



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corporations, to plan for the future of this province while enjoying both the wealth and natural beauty of B.C. It appears to us that the B.C. United Party wishes to sow the seeds of division through false information and allegations. We are confident that ALL British Columbians will see the value of this Agreement and the opportunity it offers to B.C.

The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the B.C. Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN), First Nations Summit (FNS), and the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (UBCIC).

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For further information:

- Haida Nation website: <https://www.haidanation.ca/>
- Backgrounder on the Draft Agreement on Haida Aboriginal Title:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/consulting-with-first-nations/first-nations-negotiations/first-nations-a-z-listing/haida-nation-council-of/haida-title-agreement#Haida-info-sessions>