

March 12, 2024

FNLC Calls on the Vancouver Park Board to Halt Planned Eviction of CRAB Park

(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) condemns the recent plans by the Vancouver Park Board to close CRAB Park and remove structures containing “construction materials” before allowing residents to return with temporary tent shelters only. CRAB park has been home to residents since May 2021 and shelters at least 30 full-time residents, many of whom are First Nations citizens.

This move by the Vancouver Park Board is none other than a forced eviction and is a blatant disregard of human rights exposing a distinct lack of empathy and compassion for the dehousing. Without readily available housing alternatives, confiscating the structures that have been put together by park residents is totally unacceptable. Furthermore, a Supreme Court decision in January 2022 has previously denied the Vancouver Park Board’s attempts to prevent people from sheltering at the park during the day.

The FNLC calls on the Vancouver Park Board and the City of Vancouver to adhere to the court’s decision and halt the planned eviction of CRAB Park. This park is evidently more than a temporary shelter for its residents. Forcing them to live in tents with no provision of essential services like sanitation, potable water, electricity, garbage removal, etc. is quite inhumane and limits resident’s rights to communal gathering.

“Encampments are not a safe or suitable alternative to housing,” remarked Hugh Braker at the First Nations Summit Political Executive. “We need to focus on increasing the availability of safe, accessible, and supportive housing for all instead of these militarized and draconian approaches to homelessness. Forced evictions of encampments further perpetuate the trauma and harm that many of our relatives endured in the residential school system and in the child welfare system.”

Regional Chief Terry Teegee stated, “we have previously called on the province of BC to declare a state of emergency with regards to the homelessness crisis and to provide immediate supports for municipalities to address homelessness within their jurisdictions. We need to move forward with the non-negotiable understanding that those who are dehousing have the right to access safe and supportive housing.”

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs concluded, “There must be a co-developed, holistic and whole-of-government approach to effectively address the homelessness crisis disproportionately impacting our First Nations peoples. Municipalities across BC must understand their role in the alignment and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the municipal level.”



BRITISH COLUMBIA
ASSEMBLY OF
FIRST NATIONS

1004 Landooz Rd.
Prince George, BC
V2K 5S3

Ph: 778-945-9910
Fx: 778-945-9916



FIRST
NATIONS
SUMMIT

1200-100 Park Royal South
West Vancouver, BC
V7T 1A2

Ph: 604-926-9903
Fx: 604-926-9923
Toll Free: 866-990-9939



UNION OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA
INDIAN CHIEFS

401 – 312 Main Street
Vancouver, BC
V6A 2T2

Ph: 604-684-0231
Fx: 604-684-5726

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

For further comment please contact:

Grand Chief Stewart Philip, Union of BC Indian Chiefs 250-490-5314

Hugh Braker, First Nations Summit: 604-812-2632

Annette Schroeter, BCAFN Communications Officer: 778-281-1655