

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Press Release

March 4, 2024

First Nations Release Critical Minerals Strategy in British Columbia to Facilitate Net Zero by 2050

(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətał (Tseil Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) - First Nations in B.C. have announced a proactive critical minerals strategy for their territories in British Columbia. The First Nations Critical Minerals Strategy was facilitated and prepared by the BC First Nations Energy and Mining Council and supported by the First Nations Leadership Council.

This strategy was developed at four half-day interactive webinars between October 2023 and January 2024 with more than 250 participants from First Nation communities throughout the province. Federal and Provincial Ministers also presented at these meetings, committing to working in partnership with First Nations toward net zero carbon emissions by 2050. This means implementing credible ways for industry and governments to transition their facilities and operations to reduce and eliminate their carbon emissions to fight climate change. The First Nations Critical Minerals Strategy sets a road map to achieve these goals through a series of 50 recommendations.

The governments of Canada and British Columbia have also developed critical minerals strategies to facilitate the global net zero carbon energy transition by 2050. British Columbia's phase 1 critical minerals strategy commits to aligning their plan with the First Nations Critical Minerals Strategy.

BC Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief Terry Teegee states, "the First Nations strategy is a grassroots plan developed by community members about their critical mineral priorities. We value the community input including the thoughtful advice on the four themed areas: 1. Environmental protection recommendations, 2. Socio economic recommendations, 3. Clean energy (related to projects) recommendations, 4. Land rights recommendations."

"173 years after gold was first confirmed on Haida Gwaii, in what is now known as British Columbia, the time has arrived for the governments of Canada and British Columbia to work on a trilateral basis with First Nations on the consent-based extraction of critical minerals from Indigenous First Nations lands in a manner that is fully aligned with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," said Robert Phillips of the First Nations Summit Political Executive. "I attended all the sessions with the communities as well as acted as a co-chair to the BC government advisory committee on the development of their critical minerals strategy. A priority action of the BC plan is to align our collective initiatives and I fully expect we will achieve success."



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The Union of BC Indian Chiefs has passed a resolution in support of the draft First Nations Critical Minerals Strategy at their recent UBCIC Chiefs Council assembly on February 22, 2024. Resolutions will also go forward to the BCAFN and FNS Spring assemblies.

UBCIC President, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip echoes the commitments of the strategy and concluded, “The climate emergency is upon us, and we need to accelerate our transition away from fossil fuels in order to reduce global warming. It is absolutely essential that First Nations are full partners in any discussions, plans or profits regarding critical mineral extraction in their unceded territories. We look forward to working in partnership with BC and Canada and expect them to fully align their respective critical mineral strategies with our BC First Nations strategy. We will support all 50 recommendations contained in the strategy and will seek to collaborate with Canada and BC to align their strategies with those recommendations from First Nations in BC”.

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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).

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