



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

www.bcafn.ca

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

September 24, 2020

BC Assembly of First Nations frustrated by Canadian federal government's Speech from the Throne 2020

(Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George, BC – Sept. 24, 2020) – Yesterday, the Canadian federal government delivered the Speech from the Throne opening the 44th session of Parliament and outlining their upcoming agenda. The BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) once again heard a number of urgent priority actions meant to address the downward spiraling quality of life faced by Indigenous peoples in Canada. This past year in particular has been difficult as First Nations' lives and communities in British Columbia have been deeply impacted by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The BCAFN has seen slow progress on previous commitments and expects to see full and concrete delivery of promises that have been made in the 2020 Speech from the Throne that will address the many escalating critical issues experienced by First Nations in B.C.

"I expect the federal government to carry through with the urgent priorities that the BCAFN has brought forward and highlighted repeatedly over months and years. Reconciliation must be taken seriously by the federal government for substantial and transformative change to occur in Canadian society. I expect this government to follow through on these words and commitments with urgency, not more delays," stated Regional Chief Terry Teegee. "Good health, economic recovery and prosperity are within reach for all Canadians if we can come together."

Canadian government priorities outlined in the throne speech that would advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples include:

- legislation to implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*,
- infrastructure and affordable housing,
- action on climate change,
- funding to improve First Nations participation in the green economy,
- First Nations direct involvement in fisheries management,
- expedite work to co-develop new legislation to ensure access to high-quality, culturally relevant health care and mental health and wellness strategy,
- address systemic racism,
- action on reforms in the justice system with accelerated work to co-develop a legislative framework for First Nations policing as an essential service,

This past year has been disappointing for Indigenous peoples across Canada as the federal government failed to pass legislation (Bill C-262) implementing the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and delayed the National Action Plan in response to the *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice*. As well, this year has seen slow progress in the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. The BCAFN looks forward to having further details of commitments regarding reconciliation actions revealed in the upcoming federal government Budget Speech.

For further information contact:

Annette Schroeter, Communications Officer, phone (250)962-1603.

#honouringourancestors



bcafn