



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, Merritt, BC
March 7 & 8, 2019

Resolution 04/2019

SUBJECT: CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BC FIRST NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

MOVED BY: DUSTIN RIVERS, PROXY FOR SQUAMISH NATION

SECONDED BY: CHIEF MARK POINT, SKOWKALE FIRST NATION

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. The October 2018 report entitled "Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C" by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the November 2018 Fourth National Climate Assessment report found that:
- A. Human activity and growth is the dominant cause of observed climate change over the past century;
 - B. A changing climate is causing sea levels to rise and an increase in wildfires, severe storms, droughts, and other extreme weather events that threaten human life, Indigenous food security, healthy communities, and critical infrastructure;
 - C. Global warming at or above 2 degrees Celsius beyond pre-industrialized levels will cause:
 - a. mass migration from the regions most affected by climate change;
 - b. wildfires that, by the end of the century, will burn twice as much average area per year in Canada by the end of the century as has burned in the recent past, and the diseases associated with that;
 - c. a loss of more than 99 percent of all coral reefs on Earth;
 - d. more than 350,000,000 more people to be exposed globally to deadly heat stress by 2050;

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A blue ink signature of Terry Teegee, the BC Regional Chief.

Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief

- D. Global temperatures must be kept below 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrialized levels to avoid the most severe impacts of a changing climate, which will require:
- a. global reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from human sources of 40 to 60 percent from 2010 levels by 2030; and
 - b. net-zero emissions by 2050;
- E. Climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet. Canada's response to climate change has included signing the Paris Agreement (2015) and developing the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change* (the "Framework") as the pathway to achieve Canada's commitments. The Framework includes four pillars: pricing carbon pollution; investing in clean technology, innovation and jobs; adapt and build resilience; and other complementary climate actions;
- F. climate change, pollution, and environmental destruction have exacerbated systemic racial, regional, social, environmental, and economic injustices by disproportionately affecting indigenous communities, communities of color, migrant communities, deindustrialized communities, depopulated rural communities, the poor, low-income workers, women, the elderly, the unhoused, people with disabilities, and youth;
- G. in December 2018, BC released CleanBC ("CleanBC") (2018), a plan for a new low-carbon economy, which includes ambitious targets and actions to reduce greenhouse gases. CleanBC states, "making these changes cannot leave anyone behind", and includes a commitment to "work in collaborations with Indigenous people to seize new clean economy opportunities and help communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change;"
- H. BC's 2019 budget included \$902 Million to implement CleanBC over the next three years. Some of the investments specific to Indigenous Peoples includes \$3 million to support the BC Indigenous Clean Energy Initiative and \$15 million for the new Remote Community Clean Energy Strategy;
- I. on October 25th, 2016, the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly passed Resolution 30/2016 demanding that any climate change plan developed by Canada must be done so in conjunction with Indigenous Peoples and must recognize and uphold our inherent and constitutionally protected Indigenous Title, Rights, and Treaty Rights.;
- J. in October 26th, 2016, the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly passed Resolution 31/2016 directing the Regional Chief to call on the Government of Canada to ensure that plans and actions to address climate change be guided by Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and be collaboratively developed with Indigenous Peoples;
- K. to date, BC's First Nations have not been meaningfully involved in the development of Federal and Provincial legislation, strategies, plans and other decisions related to climate change;
- L. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* states:
- Article 25:** Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relations with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters, and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard;
- Article 29:** (1) Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall

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establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination.

Article 32: (1) Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources; (2) States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the Indigenous peoples concerned prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources; (3) States shall provide effective mechanisms for just and fair redress for any such activities, and appropriate measures shall be taken to mitigate adverse environmental, economic, social, cultural or spiritual impact.

- M. extreme events threaten BC, including in recent years the mountain pine beetle epidemic, drought, unprecedented wildfires and floods, and landslides. Experts state that these patterns will get worse with climate change;
- N. Indigenous communities are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts and disproportionately affected while having contributed relatively little to the problem. The unique threats faced by Indigenous Communities requires explicit consideration and timely planning;
- O. Indigenous peoples have thousands of years of knowledge that comes from the intrinsic relationship we have with our territories and ecosystems. The inclusion of this knowledge is essential to the success of policies and measures directed towards mitigating and adapting to climate change;
- P. there is a historic and time-sensitive opportunity to elevate the role of BC First Nations to their rightful role as Rights and Title holders in their respective Territories, and to co-develop climate change strategies and implementation plans with British Columbia and Canada; and
- Q. First Nations have the right to determine and direct their own environmental strategies and policies concerning the continued development of projects that directly impact the welfare and conservation of their lands, territories and resources:
- R. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly recognizes the breakdown of the stable climate and sea level under which human civilization constitutes a climate emergency; and
- S. a BC First Nations Climate Change Strategy and Climate Change Advisory Group could drive climate change resilience, protect and maintain important resources, foster sustainable economic growth, and promote long-term community and spiritual vitality.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly demand that any climate change plan developed for projects by British Columbia must be done in conjunction with Indigenous peoples and must recognize and uphold our inherent and constitutionally protected Indigenous Title, Rights and Treaty Rights and be consistent with the historic Supreme Court of Canada's *Tsilhqot'in Nation* judgment and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the Regional Chief to ensure that any climate change plan developed by British Columbia must stop the further expansion of greenhouse gas emitting projects and

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infrastructure (whether the GHG emissions are produced locally or via fossil fuel exports), and support development of renewable energy and alternative energy economies;

3. the BC Chiefs-in-Assembly supports BCAFN's participation in ongoing engagement on climate change with the Government of Canada, and the Province;
4. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly supports the development and implementation of a BC First Nations led climate action session that will strengthen and facilitate First Nation participation in a just transition to an economy that achieves greenhouse gas reductions to 40-60% by 2030 from 2010 levels and net zero emissions by 2050 and work to rectify the shortfalls of the CleanBC plan;
5. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs Regional Chief, working with the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the First Nations Summit as the First Nations Leadership Council, to seek resources and plan a climate action session for First Nations in BC that will involve strategy and planning to implement responses to climate change including mitigation, adaptation and clean growth activities, specifically planning around First Nations participating in achieving greenhouse gas reductions of 40-60% by 2030 from 2010 levels and net zero emissions by 2050 through a fair and just transition for our communities and workers; and
6. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the Regional Chief, working with the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the First Nations Summit as the First Nations Leadership Council, to prepare a bold Just Transition Plan/First Nations Climate Change Strategy for BC to review and provide feedback on. This BC First Nations' Just Transition Plan/Strategy will align with the IPCC's recommendations and scientifically backed reduction targets and will establish the importance of ensuring that climate planning protects traditional ecological knowledge, and is respectful of and co-created with First Nations in BC.

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