



## BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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**BCAFN 17<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**November 17 & 18, 2020**

**Online via Zoom**

**Resolution 17/2020**

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**SUBJECT:** **CALL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIGENOUS YOUTH HOUSING ACTION PLAN**

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**MOVED BY:** **KUKPI7 JUDY WILSON, NESKONLITH INDIAN BAND**

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**SECONDED BY:** **CHIEF HARVEY MCLEOD, UPPER NICOLA INDIAN BAND**

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**DECISION:** **CARRIED**

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**WHEREAS:**

- A. Indigenous youth face significant challenges when aging out of care, including a lack of access to safe and affordable housing. There is an urgent need for the development of a youth housing policy framework which has been amplified by the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- B. On March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021, the emergency measures that have been put in place by the Province of BC to allow youth in care to remain in their placements and to pause them aging out of care will end, resulting in approximately 1000 youth aging out at that time and creating a super-highway to youth homelessness as the sector does not have the capacity to support this number of youth aging into independence.
- C. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of BC, committed to implement, affirms:
  - Article 21(1): Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas

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**Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief**

of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.

Article 21(2): States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.

Article 23: Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.

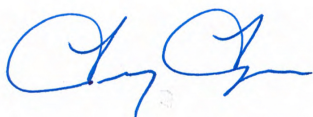
- D. AFN Chiefs-in-Assembly and the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly have supported the need to address homelessness for First Nations via BCAFN Resolution 08/2020 *Action Plan for First Nations Homelessness on and off reserve* and via the 2018 AFN *National First Nations Housing and Related Infrastructure Strategy*.
- E. Due to lack of available housing, youth tent encampments are being contemplated in the Cowichan Valley as a desperate measure to assist vulnerable youth at risk. This measure does not meet the basic human rights standards that Indigenous youth are entitled to and deserve.
- F. There is an urgent need to respond to this crisis and to address the increasing level of Indigenous youth homelessness and youth who are housing insecure. A distinct Indigenous Youth Housing Strategy, that meets the developmental and cultural needs of young people, is required to respond to this issue.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

- 1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call upon the Ministry of Children and Family Development to provide information on the cohort of youth expected to age out of care on March 31, 2021 by January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly. This information should include the number of youth aging out per community and what type of housing intervention is needed to prevent homelessness for each individual young person, to allow for the development of a comprehensive youth housing strategy;
- 2. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call upon the provincial government and agencies to ensure all Indigenous youth have a housing plan, and comprehensive transition plans that address the needs of youth in a holistic way that is sustainable, safe, and secure prior to aging out of care during COVID-19, including an extension of emergency measures post March 31<sup>st</sup> for youth who do not have appropriate housing or support to thrive; and

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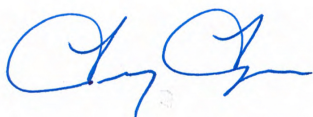
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3. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly support the BCAFN Regional Chief and staff to work with the UBCIC and FNS as the FNLC with the BC Coalition to End Youth Homelessness and other likeminded organizations to develop youth housing strategies and an Indigenous Youth Housing Action Plan and to ensure that these strategies and plans incorporate wrap-around services and holistic supports.
4. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call on the Regional Chief, UBCIC and FNS working as the FNLC to report to the Chiefs-in-assembly at the upcoming Special Chiefs Assembly on the development of the Indigenous Youth Housing Action Plan.

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