



BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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BCAFN 17th ANNUAL SPECIAL CHIEFS MEETING
March 3 & 4, 2021
Online via Zoom

Resolution 05/2021

SUBJECT: SUPPORTING FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITY-BASED CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

MOVED BY: CHIEF PATRICK MICHELL, KANAKA BAR INDIAN BAND

SECONDED BY: CHIEF BYRON LOUIS, OKANAGAN INDIAN BAND

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* states:

Article 8: (1) Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture; (2) States shall provide effective mechanisms for prevention of, and redress for: (a) Any action which has the aim or effect of depriving them of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities; (b) Any action which has the aim or effect of dispossessing them of their lands, territories or resources; (d) Any form of forced assimilation or integration;

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

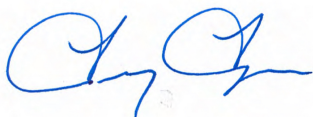
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Article 32: (1) Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources; (2) States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the Indigenous 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;

- B. Climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies, particularly to Indigenous Peoples. Extreme and unusual climate events are occurring more often and in all regions of BC, exacerbating natural disasters and environmental impacts. This climate destruction threatens First Nations' traditions, cultures, Rights and livelihoods;
- C. Climate change also contributes to biodiversity loss, which directly impacts traditional foods for First Nations and our holistic relationships with the environment and the land. Urgent and timely measures are needed;
- D. In 2019, BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly passed Resolution no. 04/2019: *Climate Emergency and support for the development of a BC First Nations Climate Change Strategy*;
- E. In 2019, the Chiefs-in-Assembly at the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) declared a First Nations Climate Emergency (Resolution 05/2019), recognizing "that the climate crisis constitutes a state of emergency for our lands, waters, animals and peoples, and that we will accordingly utilize our local, national, and international forums and partnerships to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius;"
- F. The Government of Canada, through its most recent climate plan, *A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy*, has expressed a commitment to partner with Indigenous Peoples to set an agenda for climate action and framework for collaboration;
- G. The Government of Canada, through its most recent ministerial mandate letters, the speech from the throne and its newest climate plan: *A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy*, has expressed a commitment to work with Indigenous peoples to, among other things:
 - exceed Canada's 2030 climate target and legislate the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050;
 - set an agenda for climate action and framework for collaboration;
 - ensure rural, remote and Indigenous communities that currently rely on diesel have the opportunity to be powered by clean, reliable energy by 2030;
 - work to conserve 25% of Canada's land and oceans by 2025 and 30% by 2030;
 - protect biodiversity, species at risk, people and the environment by evaluating and enhancing the Species at Risk Act (SARA) and the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA);
 - address food insecurity through the introduction of a new food policy in Canada; and,
 - prepare a national Adaptation strategy;
- H. The Government of BC through their ministerial mandate letters and the foundational principles identified therein, have committed to:

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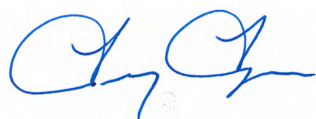
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- “Lasting and meaningful reconciliation...focused on creating opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in our economy”;
 - to ensure that the CleanBC Plan puts BC “on a path to a cleaner, better future by building a low-carbon economy...protecting our air, land and water and supporting communities to prepare for climate impacts”;
 - meet BC’s climate gas emissions targets, establish sectoral targets, and legislate a new target of net-zero by 2050;
 - complete and implement a provincial Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy;
 - develop a new provincial coastal strategy; and,
 - work with partners to protect species at risk and work collaboratively with other ministries to protect and enhance B.C.’s biodiversity;
- I. The atmosphere knows no borders or jurisdictions, so climate change is a global problem. At the international level, countries around the world recognized the urgency to act on climate change with the adoption of the Paris Agreement (2015), which pledges to reduce GHG pollution to keep warming under 2°C, and, if possible, 1.5°C. In the Paris Agreement, State Parties agreed that they should, when taking action to address climate change, recognize and respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- J. Globally, Indigenous Peoples have been strongly advocating for the recognition of our important role in fighting climate change, as well as the respect of our Inherent Rights and Indigenous Knowledge. Since 2017, at the United Nations’ Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Indigenous Peoples are participating through the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP). The LCIPP seeks to strengthen the knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of Indigenous Peoples; to facilitate the exchange of experience and best practices on mitigation and adaptation; and to enhance the engagement of Indigenous Peoples in the UNFCCC process, among other efforts;
- K. There is an urgent and historic opportunity to elevate the role of First Nations in BC to their rightful role as Rights-, Title- and Treaty Rights-holders in their respective Territories, and to co-develop climate change strategies and implementation plans with British Columbia and Canada; and,
- L. First Nations are already leaders in environmental and climate action and whose leadership is necessary at all levels - local, regional, national and international - to achieve positive outcomes for Mother Earth, human and non-human beings alike, and future generations.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief and staff to:
 - i. continue engaging the Provincial and Federal governments to advocate for the development of climate policies and plans that are centred on full partnerships with First Nations which respect their Rights, Title and Treaty Rights, and which prioritize and invest in Indigenous climate leadership as a crucial way to tackle climate change;

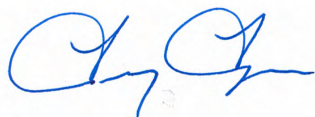
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- ii. call on the Provincial and Federal governments to provide adequate financial capacity to support First Nations in BC, and women, Elders, and youth to participate in climate response and to maintain their important role as stewards of their Territories and the environment;
 - iii. support research opportunities which strengthen efforts to improve climate policy, especially as it relates to prioritizing Indigenous climate leadership and Indigenous Knowledge; and,
 - iv. continue to work in partnership with the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs and the First Nations Summit, acting as the First Nations Leadership Council to advance climate response, as well as with partners at the Assembly of First Nations.
2. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief and staff to support community-led climate initiatives across BC, including the development of leadership and education opportunities for First Nations youth, to:
 - i. enhance First Nations' capacity and build resilience to adapt to the impacts of climate change;
 - ii. reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the community level and help keep global warming below 1.5°C; and,
 - iii. place First Nations in a leadership role to advance and benefit from the growth of a new, clean and just economy, which is also premised on respect for their Rights, Title and Treaty Rights.
3. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief and staff to pursue advocacy opportunities regarding climate change and sovereignty at multiple scales, including United Nations (UN) mechanisms related to climate response and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, the UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and building relationships to enable mutual learning with Indigenous Peoples from other parts of the world.

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