



## BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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**BCAFN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**September 19-21, 2023**  
**Hybrid - In person & online via Zoom**

**Resolution 37/2023**

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**SUBJECT:** **SUPPORT FOR FIRST NATIONS INVOLVEMENT IN NEGOTIATIONS ON NEW  
TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES FUNDING**

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**MOVED BY:** **CHIEF LYNDA PRICE, ULKATCHO FIRST NATION**

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**SECONDED BY:** **SEMPULYAN GONZALES, PROXY, SQUAMISH NATION**

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**DECISION:** **CARRIED**

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**WHEREAS:**

- A. The impacts of climate change will continue to exacerbate emergency events in BC, including wildfires, damaging storms, atmospheric rivers and floods, droughts and landslides.
- B. Wildfires in BC numbered over 1,642 from April 1, 2021 to March 28, 2022, with 869 million hectares burned, 181 evacuation orders, 304 evacuation alerts, a 56-day provincial state of emergency, and millions of dollars of costs (\$565 million) and estimated insurance damages (\$102 million) as a result of catastrophic loss to lands and critical infrastructure – the wildfire season in 2023 has been worse than 2022 and projected to continue into the winter.
- C. Flooding in BC reached unprecedented levels in 2021, with extreme rainstorms caused by atmospheric river events hitting several regions of the province and resulting in mudslides, landslides, and catastrophic flooding causing damage to infrastructure, roads, bridges and homes in and around First Nations communities in BC, with parts of BC being completely submerged in water causing at least \$450 million in damage with as many as 42 First Nations communities impacted.

**Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of September 2023**

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**Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief**

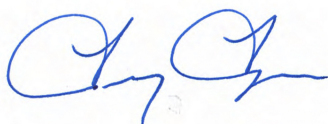
- D. Significant resources, financial, natural, and human, were expended during both wildfire and flooding crises; however, these resources were insufficient and/or poorly managed and allocated to address First Nations' needs, challenges and priorities.
- E. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of BC, committed to implement, affirms:

**Article 18:** Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.

**Article 19:** States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.

- F. The First Nations Summit, working with the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) and the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) as the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) entered into a tripartite memorandum of understanding (the MOU) in 2019 with the Government of Canada (represented by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)), and the government of British Columbia (represented by Emergency Management BC (EMBC) and BC Wildfire Service (BCWS)) for the purpose of working collectively to advance meaningful recognition and enhanced capacity of First Nations within all pillars of emergency management (i.e., preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery).
- G. The First Nations Summit Chiefs in Assembly passed Resolution #0619.17 "Support for Tripartite MOU between the First Nations Leadership Council, Indigenous Services Canada, and Emergency Management BC/BC Wildfire Service" endorsing the tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the UBCIC, BCAFN and FNS, working together as the FNLC, the Government of Canada (represented by ISC), and the Government of British Columbia (represented by EMBC and BCWS) that was signed on April 27, 2019, and also called upon the federal and provincial governments to provide permanent, reliable, and appropriate funding directly to First Nations communities to prepare for, respond to and mitigate impacts resulting from wildfires and other emergencies; and called upon the federal and provincial governments to provide permanent, reliable, and appropriate funding for the FNLC, First Nations Emergency Services Society of BC, and other like-minded organizations to work together to provide various supports to First Nations communities, and be full and equal partners in the MOU.
- H. Canada, represented by ISC and British Columbia, represented by EMBC & BCWS, have in place a ten-year bilateral service agreement signed in 2017 providing for the delivery of services meant to "improve emergency management in First Nation communities and begin to negotiate service agreements with the provinces and territories to ensure First Nations received service equivalent to municipalities" (the Bilateral Agreement).

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**Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief**

- I. ISC and EMBC & BCWS sent a letter to the FNLC dated March 24th, 2022 expressing their intent to open discussions, and negotiations, regarding the Bilateral Agreement and include First Nations in a new relationship that implements the UN Declaration and respects First Nations' jurisdiction and inherent right of self-government, and with the recognition that First Nations require resources, infrastructure and enhanced capacity in order to advance the practice of emergency management in a manner that supports and reinforces their own governance, institutions and decision-making authority.
- J. First Nations must be supported by ensuring adequate financial and technical resources are in place to respond to climate change impacts and for First Nations-developed mitigation and adaptive measures (e.g. monitoring, and impact assessments).

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

1. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call upon the federal and provincial governments to commit to working in partnership with First Nations to address all phases of emergency management issues, and to:
  - a. provide permanent, reliable, and appropriate funding directly to First Nations communities to prepare for, respond to and mitigate impacts resulting from wildfires and other emergencies, and
  - b. provide permanent, reliable, and appropriate funding for the First Nations Summit (FNS), the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) and the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) working together as the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), First Nations Emergency Services Society of BC, and other like-minded organizations to work together to provide various supports to First Nations communities.
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the BCAFN Regional Chief to request that all funding allocations submitted by First Nations for all emergencies be immediately finalized and reimbursed by Emergency Management and Climate Readiness BC, and or Indigenous Services Canada.
3. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly support Canada and British Columbia in expanding the Bilateral Agreement to a new trilateral agreement with First Nations in BC, for the purposes of ensuring satisfactory, effective and equitable funding and resourcing within the four pillars of emergency management in First Nation communities and to be full and equal partners in the new tripartite agreement.

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**Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief**