



BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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BCAFN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
October 28, 29 & 30, 2025
Hybrid - In person & online via Zoom

Resolution 32/2025

SUBJECT: SUPPORTING FIRST NATIONS JURISDICTION IN FIRE STEWARDSHIP AND CULTURAL BURNING

MOVED BY: DEPUTY CHIEF HARLAN SCHILLING, DAYLU DENE NATION

SECONDED BY: CHIEF DEAN NELSON, LIL'WAT NATION

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations are facing more forest fires, floods, and heat events that threaten safety, food and culture, and require First Nations-led stewardship and fire practices;
- B. First Nations hold inherent title and rights, and treaty rights, to steward their lands through intentional and respectful use of fire, grounded in their own laws and leadership;
- C. First Nations' inherent rights to decision-making and stewardship is affirmed in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (the UN Declaration) articles 3, 18, 19, 25, 26, and 29, which are binding under British Columbia's *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act, 2019), Canada's *United Nations Declaration Act* (UN Declaration Act, 2021);
 - Article 3: Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination.
 - Article 8: Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture.

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Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief

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 procedure.

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;

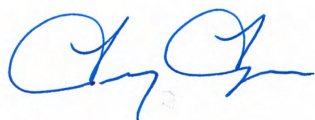
Article 25: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.

Article 26: Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.

Article 29: Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources.

- C. British Columbia's 2022 Declaration Act Action Plan Measure 2.11 commits the Province to integrate traditional practices and cultural uses of fire into forest fire prevention and land management practices and support the reintroduction of strategized burning;
- D. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030), the Abbott/Chapman Review (2018), the Nadleah Whut'en *Trial by Fire* Report (2019), and the Tsilhqot'in Nation's *The Fires Awakened Us* Report (2019) identify barriers to fire stewardship, including restrictive permitting and regulatory frameworks, lack of liability protections, and limited, non-distinctions-based funding;
- E. The 2019 Emergency Management Services Memorandum of Understanding, signed between FNLC and the Governments of Canada, and British Columbia, committed the parties to work collaboratively to secure recognition of First Nations' jurisdiction to build capacity in emergency management;
- F. BCAFN Resolution 24/2021 supported the co-development of a First Nations Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Action Plan, aligned with the Sendai Framework, to strengthen prevention, mitigation, preparedness, and recovery in response to wildfires, floods, and climate-related disasters;

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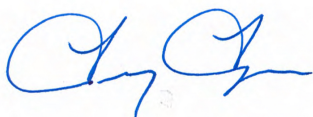
Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief

- G. BCAFN Resolution 14/2024, UBCIC Resolution 2024-16, and FNS Resolution 0424.07 direct the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) to work with the Governments of Canada and British Columbia, through multilateral negotiations to replace the current 2017-2027 Emergency Management Services Agreement with a new funding model that recognizes First Nations jurisdiction and supports preparedness, mitigation, and coordination capacity; and
- H. Despite these findings and opportunities for co-development, First Nations advancing fire stewardship continue to face systemic barriers, including restrictive permitting, lack of liability protections, and insufficient distinctions-based funding to support their stewardship practices.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly support the recognition of First Nations' rights to continue the exercise and defence of their inherent title and rights, and laws and legal traditions, to steward their unceded territories through the intentional use of fire, and to respond to any unjustified infringement through their own laws and Canadian constitutional law;
2. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief, working with the First Nations Summit (FNS) and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) as the First Nations Leadership Council, to advocate that all agreements, policies, and regulations related to fire stewardship be co-developed with First Nations title and rights holders, in alignment with Section 3 of the British Columbia's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and BC's Declaration Act;
3. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly support collaboration with First Nations fire stewardship leaders, organizations and partners to share knowledge through webinars, communication materials, and Assembly updates, ensuring community-led knowledge informs policy and program development; and
4. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call on the Federal and Provincial Governments to provide sustained and predictable funding to support First Nations' jurisdiction and full participation in fire stewardship.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Terry Teegee', is written over a horizontal line.

Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief