



BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

1992 Landooz Road
Prince George, BC V2K 5S3
Website: www.bcafn.ca

BCAFN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

October 28, 29 & 30, 2025

Hybrid - In person & online via Zoom

Resolution 40/2025

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY FUNDING FOR PROFESSIONAL CERTIFIED PRIVATE SAFEGUARD SERVICES PATROLS AND EMERGENCY SHELTERS ON FIRST NATION RESERVES IN RESPONSE TO THE ESCALATING TOXIC DRUG CRISIS

MOVED BY: KENNETH (KEN) JOHNSON, PROXY, KISPIOX BAND

SECONDED BY: KUKPI7 ROSANNE CASIMIR, TK'EMLUPS TE SECWEPEMC

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. British Columbia has been in a state of emergency due to the toxic drug crisis for almost a decade. The toxic drug poisoning is the leading cause of unnatural death in the province;
- B. First Nations people are disproportionately impacted by the toxic drug crisis at incredibly high rates. From January to June 2023, First Nations died from overdose at six times the rate of their non-First Nation counterparts;
- C. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration), which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of B.C., passed legislation committing to implement, affirms:
 - Article 7(1): Indigenous peoples have the rights to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security of the person;
 - Article 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves

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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.

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

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 programs affecting them, and as far as possible, to administer such programs through their own institutions.

Article 24(2): Indigenous people have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right.

Article 34: Indigenous peoples have the right to promote, develop and maintain their institutional structures and their distinctive customs, spirituality, traditions, procedures, practices and, in the cases where they exist, juridical systems or customs, in accordance with international human rights standards.

- D. The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan*, which was developed in partnership with rights and title holders and the Province of BC, commits 89 long-term cross-ministerial actions to support the provincial implementation of the UN Declaration, which includes the following action items to be achieved by 2027:

4.8: In alignment with the tripartite health plans and agreements, continue to strengthen and evolve the First Nation health governance structure in B.C. to ensure First Nations are supported to participate as full and equal partners in decision-making and service delivery at local, regional and provincial levels, and engage First Nations and the government of Canada on the need for legislation as envisioned in the tripartite health plans and agreements.

4.11: Increase the availability, accessibility and the continuum of Indigenous-led and community-based social services and supports that are trauma-informed, culturally safe and relevant, and address a range of holistic wellness needs for those who are in crisis, at-risk or have experienced violence, trauma and/or significant loss.

4.13: Increase the availability and accessibility of culturally safe substance use services, including through the renovation and construction of Indigenous-run treatment centres and the integration of land-based and traditional approaches to healing.

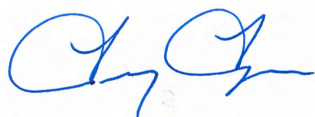
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- E. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan*, which was developed in partnership with rights and title holders and the Government of Canada, commits 181 long-term cross-ministerial actions to support the federal implementation of the UN Declaration, which includes the following action items to be achieved by 2028:
- 81: Improve health equity through access to culturally appropriate health and wellness services and support for holistic approaches to healing, including community-based, land-based, culturally relevant and trauma informed mental health services addressing – among other things – suicide and addictions crises.
 - 89: Work with partners and Indigenous organizations on mental health promotion programming and prevention initiatives, including using distinctions-based approaches where feasible to support culturally safe, relevant and trauma-informed initiatives.
- F. The current services provided by the BC RCMP to First Nation reserves are insufficient and do not adequately address the widespread distribution of illegal and toxic drugs rampant within First Nations communities, leaving our most vulnerable community members unable to protect themselves and First Nations without adequate support to mitigate this crisis;
- G. The escalating crisis has compelled First Nations across BC to take extraordinary measures such as the Gwa'Sala-Nakwaxda'xw Nation declaring a state of emergency in March 2024 due to the opioid crisis, as well as the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council in September 2024. The Tsilhqot'in delegation at the 2025 United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues also spoke to the need for urgent resourcing and action to address this existential threat to our peoples;
- H. The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), a political working group comprised of the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN), First Nations Summit (FNS), and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) have passed resolutions 39/2024, 1124.07, and 2025-37 respectively, which mandate all levels of government to take immediate action to address the toxic drug poisoning crisis and its disproportionate impacts on First Nations. The resolutions further direct the three organizations to host an All-Chiefs Meeting to identify priorities, key issues and recommendations to holistically address the toxic drug poisoning crisis including developing immediate measures required for collective action;
- I. The FNLC All-Chiefs Meeting on the Toxic Drug Crisis was held on July 24, 2025, online via Zoom, featured sixteen expert speakers, and was attended by over 100 Chiefs, Health Experts and Community Members;
- J. On October 20, 2025, the Kispiox Band Council passed a resolution calling on the Province of BC to provide an immediate emergency fund to initiate, equip and operate Professional Certified Private Safeguard Services patrol on Kispiox reserve lands and for the construction and operation of an emergency shelter on Kispiox reserve lands for Kispiox Band members who are endangered due to illicit drugs distribution; and

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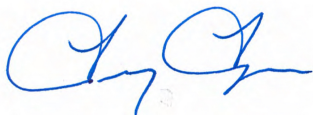
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- K. First Nations peoples have a right to safe communities and the highest standard of physical and mental health. Urgent action to end the toxic drug crisis and drastically reduce toxic drug poisoning deaths is essential to upholding this right.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly support the Kispiox Band in calling on the Government of British Columbia to:
 - a. provide an immediate Emergency Fund to initiate, equip and operate Professional Certified Private Safeguard Services patrol on Kispiox reserve lands for a duration of 3 years.
 - b. provide an immediate Emergency Fund (\$1.5 million) to construct and operate on reserve Emergency Safe Shelter for Kispiox Band members who are endangered due to illicit drugs distribution.
 - c. provide a formal response outlining steps the Province will take to address these concerns and support Kispiox community members' safety and wellbeing;
2. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call upon the Government of British Columbia and the Government of Canada to adequately resource and support the development and implementation of a First Nations-led strategy to address the toxic drug crisis, rooted in cultural healing, self-determination, and justice reform; and
3. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief and BCAFN to work with the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), and the First Nations Summit (FNS), as the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) to continue to work with the federal, provincial and municipal governments, the First Nations Health Authority, the First Nations Justice Council, and other like-minded organizations to continue advancing drug policy reforms that address the root causes of the toxic drug crisis and reduce harms to First Nations peoples.

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