BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

1004 Landooz Road
Prince George, BC V2K 5S3
Website: www.bcafn.ca

BCAFN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
October 14, 15 and 16, 2026
Hybrid - In person & online via Zoom

Resolution 26/2026

SUBJECT:	**SUPPORT FOR THE REVISED WATERSHED SECURITY STRATEGY TITLED *A SHARED PATH TO WATERSHED SECURITY: A PROPOSED WATERSHED SECURITY STRATEGY***
MOVED BY:	**CHIEF SHANA THOMAS, LYACKSON FIRST NATION**
SECONDED BY:	**CHIEF JUSTIN KANE, TS'KW'AYLAXW FIRST NATION**
DECISION:	**CARRIED**

WHEREAS:

A. First Nations in B.C. continue to exercise and uphold their inherent and constitutionally protected title, rights, laws, responsibilities, and jurisdiction in relation to their lands, waters, territories, and resources for present and future generations;

B. healthy watersheds are essential to sustaining biodiversity, ecosystem resilience, climate adaptation, fish and wildlife populations, food security, cultural continuity, and the health and well-being of First Nations communities throughout B.C.;

C. watershed security is foundational to the exercise of First Nations' title and rights and requires recognition of First Nations governance, laws, knowledge systems, and decision-making authority in all matters relating to water stewardship, watershed planning, restoration, and protection;

D. climate change is intensifying drought conditions, altering seasonal precipitation patterns, reducing snowpack accumulation, increasing temperatures, and accelerating watershed

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instability across the province, and these threats facing water and watersheds have exposed the need for a collaborative and coordinated approach to govern and steward water and watersheds in B.C.;

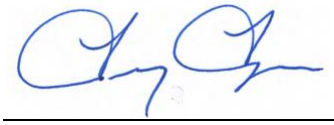
E. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration), which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of B.C., passed legislation committing to implement, affirms:

Article 18(1): 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 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 27*:* States shall establish and implement, in conjunction with Indigenous peoples concerned, a fair, independent, impartial, open and transparent process, giving due recognition to Indigenous peoples' laws, traditions, customs and land tenure systems, to recognize and adjudicate the rights of indigenous peoples pertaining to their lands, territories and resources, including those which were traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used. Indigenous peoples shall have the right to participate in this process.
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.
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;

F. the First Nations Water Caucus brings together up to 17 delegates from across BC to work together to advance First Nations priorities and interests around fresh water and watershed security. Water Caucus delegates work collaboratively with delegates from the Province of B.C. at the Water Table to make consensus-based, co-developed recommendations about matters of mutual interest related to fresh water and watershed security of province-wide interest. The Water Caucus is not an authority nor a rights holder, and cannot encumber any First Nation, nor be considered a consultation mechanism. The Water Caucus may only work to support the design of effective process' and efficiencies. The Water Caucus may also make recommendations or draft resolutions for respective leadership organizations to consider;

G. Between 2022 and 2024 the First Nations Water Caucus and the Province of B.C. co-developed a Watershed Security Strategy in line with Action 2.7 of B.C.'s Declaration Act Action Plan which

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commits the Province to collaborate with First Nations to develop and implement strategies, plans and initiatives for sustainable water management, and to identify policy or legislative reforms supporting Indigenous water stewardship, including shared decision-making, including the co-development of the Watershed Security Strategy with First Nations and initiation of implementation of the Strategy at a local watershed scale;

H. In Fall 2025, the Province informed the First Nations Water Caucus that they would not be releasing the co-developed Watershed Security Strategy, which provides a critical framework for advancing watershed health, reconciliation and collaborative governance that is desperately needed;

I. Failure to release the strategy contradicts the Province's commitments under the Declaration Act Action Plan and jeopardizes both the health of watersheds in B.C. and the ability of First Nations to meaningfully exercise their rights;

J. The First Nations Water Caucus, with secretariat support from the First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC), have revised the Watershed Security Strategy, titled "A Shared Path to Watershed Security: A Proposed Watershed Security Strategy" as a proposed framework and tool to support watershed health, collaborative governance, reconciliation, and First Nations-led watershed stewardship in B.C. The First Nations Water Caucus released "A Shared Path to Watershed Security: A Proposed Watershed Security Strategy" on July 9, 2026; and

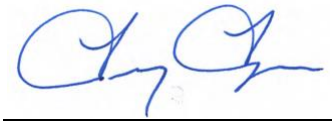
K. "A Shared Path to Watershed Security: A Proposed Watershed Security Strategy" aligns with existing BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) mandates developing and promoting policies and resources for watershed security, governance, ecosystem health, climate resilience.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly supports the revised Watershed Security Strategy as a framework titled "A Shared Path to Watershed Security: A Proposed Watershed Security Strategy" ("Strategy") brought forward by the First Nations Water Caucus, and endorses the Strategy's goals, actions, and shared vision for watershed security in British Columbia;

2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly calls upon the Province of B.C. and Canada to work in partnership with First Nations and the First Nations Water Caucus to support the implementation of First Nations-led watershed security initiatives, governance structures, restoration efforts, and long-term watershed protection measures consistent with "A Shared Path to Watershed Security: A Proposed Watershed Security Strategy" , and must include sustained and adequate provincial funding to support First Nations' leadership, participation, and watershed stewardship efforts throughout implementation;

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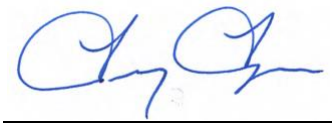
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3. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the Regional Chief and staff to advise the Province of B.C. that it has not fulfilled Action 2.7 of B.C.'s Declaration Act Action Plan which commits the Province to collaborate with First Nations to develop and implement strategies, plans and initiatives for sustainable water management, and to identify policy or legislative reforms supporting Indigenous water stewardship, including shared decision-making, including the co-development of the Watershed Security Strategy with First Nations and initiation of implementation of the Strategy at a local watershed scale;

4. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the Regional Chief and staff to continue working with the First Nations Water Caucus, the First Nations Fisheries Council, and other like-minded organizations to support watershed security initiatives and advocacy; and

5. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the Regional Chief and staff to seek adequate and sustained resourcing to support First Nations-led watershed governance, stewardship, restoration, and implementation initiatives.

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