BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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

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

Resolution 36/2026

SUBJECT:	**SUPPORT FOR THE DZAWADA'ENUXW FIRST NATION CLAIM TO RESTORE THEIR LANDS**
MOVED BY:	**CHIEF RICK JOHNSON, KWIKWASUT'INUXW HAXWA'MIS**
SECONDED BY:	**CHIEF WILLIE MOON, DZAWADA'ENUXW FIRST NATION**
DECISION:	**CARRIED**

WHEREAS:

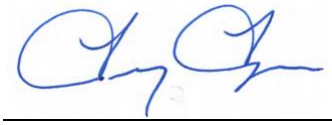
A. as First Nations people we continue to exercise our inherent and constitutionally protected title and rights to protect our lands, our waters, and our coasts, and we have the responsibility and jurisdiction to take care of the lands and resources for our future generations;

B. the Dzawada'enuxw First Nation ("Dzawada'enuxw") has maintained a continuous, law-based relationship with the lands and waters at the head of Kingcome Inlet since time immemorial, governed by ancestral legal orders that predate the arrival of the Crown and the creation of the Canadian state;

C. Dzawada'enuxw lands in the Kingcome River Valley were alienated through Crown grants and subsequent transfers into private forestry and conservation holdings without the consent of Dzawada'enuxw and without regard for Dzawada'enuxw title, rights or law:

D. contemporary conservation efforts by third-party organizations, while framed as environmental protection, often perpetuate colonial dispossession when they are built upon Crown-granted

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titles that fail to recognize the underlying and unextinguished inherent jurisdiction of the rightful title holders;

E. the Dzawada'enuxw have filed a Notice of Civil Claim (Court File No. VLC-S-S-260624) to rectify the historical and ongoing alienation of their Settlement Lands, which were improperly converted into private and "protected" holdings through a cycle of administrative dishonour;

F. 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, passed legislation committing to implement, affirms:

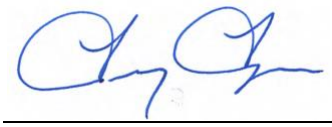
> Article 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.
> Article 26(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.
> 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;
> (2): States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with Indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent 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;

G. the Province of BC's, *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* requires the Province to take all measures necessary to ensure the laws of BC are consistent with the UN Declaration and section 7 authorizes agreements with Indigenous governing bodies for joint or consent-based decision making over lands and resources;

H. the cumulative impact of industrial extraction by the current logging company that owns the land in question and its predecessors, has resulted in ecological degradation of the Kingcome River Valley and its delicate estuary system, causing a "biological debt" through the removal of ancient forests and the disruption of the river's natural flow and regenerative capacity; and

I. these industrial practices, authorized under a colonial tenure system that ignored Dzawada'enuxw law, have caused lasting harm to the salmon and eulachan habitats that are the lifeblood of the Nation, constituting a violation of the Dzawada'enuxw's inherent responsibility to protect and sustain the lands and waters for future generations.

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THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly fully supports the Dzawada'enuxw First Nation in their legal and political efforts to restore the integrity of their territory and affirms that Dzawada'enuxw law and governance, not the colonial record of alienation, must determine the future of the Kingcome River Valley;

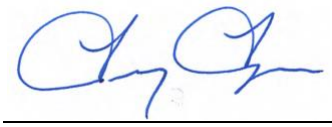
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call on the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada to resolve the Dzawada'enuxw claim through good faith, government-to-government negotiation rath than prolonged litigation, with the return of alienated lands to Dzawada'enuxw jurisdiction consistent with the UN Declaration;

3. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly asserts that conservation must never be used to validate or entrench the alienation of First Nations lands, and calls on the Province of British Columbia and environmental organizations to adopt and implement policies that prioritize returning those lands to First Nations and that support First Nations-led conservation;

4. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly urges the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada to move beyond adversarial litigation and toward an approach that respects Dzawada'enuxw laws as a valid and equal source of authority in the management of their ancestral lands; and

5. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the Regional Chief to advocate for a resolution to this claim that results in the full return of the alienated lands to the jurisdiction of the Dzawada'enuxw First Nation, ensuring these lands are once again governed by the laws and customs of the People of the Dzawada'enuxw.

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