BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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Prince George, BC V2K 5S3
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BCAFN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
October 14, 15 & 16, 2026
In person & online via Zoom

Resolution 38/2026

SUBJECT:	**SUPPORT FOR PHASE III OF THE INDIGENOUS INTERN LEADERSHIP PROGRAM**
MOVED BY:	**CHIEF JERRY JACK, MOWACHAHT/MUCHALAHT FIRST NATION**
SECONDED BY:	**CHIEF EDDY JULES, SKEETCHESN**
DECISION:	**CARRIED**

WHEREAS:

A. Canada is investing heavily in housing supply, defense capability, infrastructure, and economic growth. Those investments are creating jobs in the skilled trades, project coordination, procurement, Indigenous relations, administration, operations, and community-based delivery job sectors;

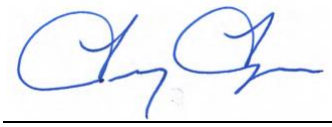
B. First Nations in British Columbia continue to face barriers to accessing, transitioning into, and remaining in employment opportunities, including in growing sectors of the Canadian and British Columbia economies, demonstrating the need for culturally relevant employment supports;

C. the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act states that:

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 21 (2): States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions.

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Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.
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 programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions;

D. Budget Canada's 2026 Spring Economic Update placed an emphasis on skilled trades expansion, apprenticeship completion, employer participation, Red Seal modernization, and the recruitment of tens of thousands of new workers required to deliver Canada's housing, infrastructure, defense, transportation, energy and nation-building ambitions;

E. the Indigenous Intern Leadership Program was established as an initiative of the Champions Table, created through the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding between BCAFN and the Business Council of British Columbia, and launched in 2018 to support Indigenous graduates in transitioning into meaningful employment;

F. Vancouver Island University serves as the lead administrative partner of the IILP;

G. the Indigenous Intern Leadership Program has demonstrated success in connecting Indigenous graduates with employment opportunities, with Phase I supporting 100 interns in employment with private companies, Indigenous organizations, governments and First Nations;

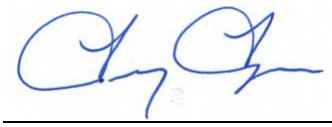
H. the Indigenous Intern Leadership Program uses an employer-supported model in which participating employers provide intern salaries and benefits, while program funding supports recruitment, employment navigation, mentorship, professional development, employer engagement and wraparound support that contribute to successful employment and retention;

I. phase III of the Indigenous Intern Leadership Program proposes to expand and strengthen the program from 2027 to 2031, including through support for Indigenous Employment Navigators hosted by implementing partners across the country, alongside enhanced regional delivery, employer engagement, mentorship and wraparound supports, and expanded pathways into skilled trades and other growing sectors;

J. phase III will expand the program into New Brunswick, the Yukon and Ontario while deepening delibery in British Columbia and maintaing strong linkages in Quebec and Alberta;

K. Indigneous Employment Navigators will serve as regional anchors and trusted interfaces among employers, Indigenous communities, post-secondary institutions, trades training providers,

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youth-serving organizations and prospective interns. Their work will include identifying talent, preparing candidates for work, coordinating interviews, helping resolve barriers to entry, matching employers and interns, facilitating cultural safety and orientation, and maintaining regular follow-up throughout placements; and

L. First Nations governments and Indigenous organizations require increased access to skilled workers in areas including economic development, housing, administration, policy, project coordination and other community priorities, and the Indigenous Intern Leadership Program can support First Nations in building and retaining this internal workforce capacity.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

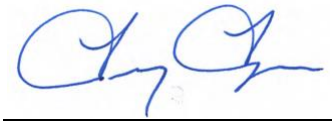
1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly support the continued development, implementation and expansion of the Indigenous Intern Leadership Program (IILP) through Phase III to increase employment, career development, and leadership opportunities for First Nations people in British Columbia and throughout Canada;

2. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief to call on the Governments of British Columbia and Canada to provide adequate, sustainable, and long-term funding to support the implementation of Phase III of the Indigenous Intern Leadership Program, including Indigenous Employment Navigators, participant supports, employer engagement, training, and regional delivery;

3. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly support the BCAFN, hosting an Indigenous Employment Navigator position to help distribute program information directly to BCAFN members and ensure program alignment with First Nations priorities. The funding for this position will be provided as part of the IILP Phase III expansion; and

4. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the Regional Chief to work with Vancouver Island University, as hosts of the IILP, to advocate for First Nations priorities, perspectives, and workforce needs to inform the continued development and implementation of Phase III of the Indigenous Intern Leadership Program.

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