



BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

22nd Annual BCAFN Special Chiefs Assembly

In Person or online Via Zoom

March 4 & 5, 2026

RESOLUTIONS LIST

NUMBER	NAME
01/2026	ENDORSEMENT OF THE BCAFN WOMEN AND 2SLGBTQQIA+ PEOPLE'S DIALOGUE SESSION 'WHAT WE HEARD REPORT' AND SUPPORT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF IT'S 105 RECOMMENDATIONS
02/2026	SUPPORT FOR FIRST NATIONS-LED GLACIERS, SNOWPACK AND WATER SECURITY INITIATIVE
03/2026	ALLOCATION OF FIRST NATIONS EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE FUNDING
04/2026	OPPOSITION TO AMENDING THE DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OR INTERPRETATION ACT
05(a-f)/2026	OMNIBUS RESOLUTION TO ADOPT SIX RESOLUTIONS
	(a) REQUIRE MEANINGFUL CONSULTATION ON AQUACULTURE REGULATIONS, LICENCE CONDITIONS, AND CLOSED CONTAINMENT DEFINITIONS
	(b) REJECT THE USE OF "SEMI-OPEN" FISH FARMS AS ACCEPTABLE TRANSITION TECHNOLOGY
	(c) DEMAND FEDERAL RELEASE OF "WHAT WE HEARD REPORT" AND RESTART OF THE OPEN NET PEN TRANSITION PLANNING PROCESS
	(d) REBUILDING WILD SALMON AS A NATION BUILDING PROJECT
	(e) CALL TO BAN TRAWLING IN PACIFIC COASTAL WATERS
	(f) IMMEDIATE REMOVAL OF OPEN PEN NET FISH FARMS FROM THE PACIFIC COAST
06/2026	RENEWED COMMITMENT TO REFORMING THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ACT
07/2026	PROTECTIONS FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ANCESTRAL REMAINS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY IN THE <i>HERITAGE CONSERVATION ACT</i>
08/2026	ENDORSEMENT OF THE FNLC-FNHIC 2025 HOUSING FORUM WHAT WE HEARD REPORT
09/2026	SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FIRST NATIONS CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
10/2026	CALL FOR ESSENTIAL SERVICES DESIGNATION FOR HEALTH AND CULTURAL SERVICES FOR RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS AND INTERGENERATIONAL SURVIVORS
11/2026	SUPPORT FOR NATION-DIRECTED NEGOTIATIONS PATHWAYS AND UPHOLDING

	GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS UNDER DRIPA
12/2026	RENEWAL OF PROTOCOL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL AND THE NATIVE COURTWORKER AND COUNSELLING ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
13/2026	SEEKING FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR THE GITXAALA AND EHATTESAHT DECISION AT THE SUPREME COURT OF CANADA
14/2026	CALL FOR FIRST RIGHT OF REFUSAL AND WATER RIGHTS TRANSFER CONSULTATION MECHANISMS IN XAXLI'P TERRITORY



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BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
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Resolution 01/2026

SUBJECT: ENDORSEMENT OF THE BCAFN WOMEN AND 2SLGBTQQIA+ PEOPLE'S DIALOGUE SESSION 'WHAT WE HEARD REPORT' AND SUPPORT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS 105 RECOMMENDATIONS

MOVED BY: KUKPI7 ROSANNE CASIMIR, TK'EMLUPS TE SECWÉPEMC

SECONDED BY: CHIEF JERRY JACK, MOWACHAHT/MUCHALAHT FIRST NATION

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nation women have always been central to leadership, governance, and Nation-building. As knowledge holders, decision-makers, and advocates for future generations, their leadership — alongside that of 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives — strengthens Indigenous legal orders and community well-being. Excluding these voices from decisions is contrary to First Nation ways of being, governance and community structures. Exclusion not only perpetuates historic patterns of marginalization, but it also destabilizes the very governance systems that sustain Nations. The inclusion of First Nation women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people is foundational, not procedural, and the safety, authority, and leadership of First Nation women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people must remain central to BCAFN advocacy;
- B. when protections shift without meaningful participation, the consequences are immediate and deeply felt — particularly by First Nation women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, who already experience disproportionate levels of violence and systemic inequities. Uncertainty surrounding

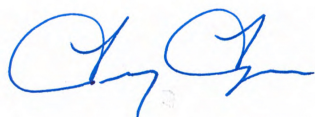
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rights, title, and jurisdiction weakens accountability mechanisms and creates tangible risks to safety and community stability;

- C. the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) establishes minimum standards for the survival, dignity, and well-being of First Nations women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Peoples, grounded in the principle of free, prior, and informed consent;
- D. the 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 3: Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
- Article 5: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their own distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.
- Article 22(2): States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.
- Article 24(2): Indigenous individuals 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;
- E. between 2017 and 2021, the BC Assembly of First Nations convened Women's and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Dialogue Sessions that strengthened First Nation governance and affirmed the central role of First Nation women and gender-diverse people in community leadership across British Columbia. The initial 2017 sessions, held on the traditional territories of the Musqueam Indian Band and Sts'ailes, created a culturally grounded space for First Nation women leaders to address shared challenges and advance strategies to enhance community wellbeing. Resulting in the Women's Declaration, which was endorsed by the Chiefs-in-Assembly, formalized collective political support and elevated women's leadership within regional decision-making structures;
- F. in 2020 and 2021, the dialogue expanded to explicitly include 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, youth, and those facing systemic barriers, reflecting First Nation values of kinship, inclusion, and collective responsibility. The updated Declaration and the formal renaming of the Women's Dialogue Session to the Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People's Dialogue Session, signaled clear commitment to gender inclusivity and to restoring traditional roles disrupted by colonial systems. Together, the dialogue session affirms that the strength, resilience, and self-determination of First Nations are deeply connected to the leadership, well-being, and full inclusion of women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people;

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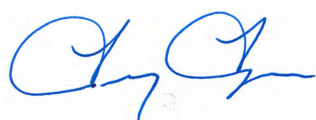
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- G. the reports and Declarations emerging from the 2017–2021 BCAFN Women’s and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Dialogue Sessions have been consolidated within the BCAFN First Nations Gender Equity Strategic Action Plan. The action plan translates the priorities, lived experiences, and recommendations identified through dialogue during the gathering into a coordinated framework for action;
- H. the BCAFN First Nations Gender Equity Strategic Action Plan outlines concrete next steps for advocacy with provincial and federal governments, establishes organizational commitments within BCAFN, and advances strategies to strengthen capacity and resources for First Nations across British Columbia;
- I. the intent of the Strategic Action Plan is to support BCAFN and like-minded organizations in implementing the Declaration, as well as the BCAFN What We Heard report on MMIWG2S+, alongside related foundational reports including Red Women Rising, the Highway of Tears Symposium Report, and Forsaken. Together, these works ground the Plan in community voice, survivor testimony, and longstanding calls for justice and systemic reform;
- J. building on this foundation, BCAFN hosted the First Nation Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People’s Dialogue Session in June 2025, with the discussion and recommendations captured in the associated 2025 Healing-in-Action What We Heard Report. This comprehensive Report and its 105 recommendations have been captured directly by BC First Nation community members, experts and leaders in attendance at the 2025 Dialogue Session; and
- K. BCAFN is now seeking support to implement these recommendations and to strengthen and expand the First Nations Gender Equity Strategic Action Plan, advancing sustained and accountable action that uplifts the leadership, safety, and well-being of First Nation women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, ensuring it remains responsive, community-driven, and reflective of evolving priorities.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly fully support and endorses the 2025 Healing-in-Action What We Heard Report from the First Nations Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People’s Dialogue Session on June 2025, and call on the Regional Chief, BCAFN Women’s Representative and the BCAFN 2SLGBTQQIA+ Representative to advocate for long term sustainable funding to ensure the implementation of the 105 recommendations across all levels of government and other related sectors; and
2. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the BCAFN to incorporate the 2025 Healing-in-Action What We Heard Report’s recommendations into the Gender Equity Strategic Action Plan to ensure the plan remains responsive, community-driven and reflective of evolving priorities.

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BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
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Resolution 02/2026

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR FIRST NATIONS-LED GLACIERS, SNOWPACK, AND WATER SECURITY INITIATIVE

Moved by: CHIEF FRANCIS LACEESE, TL'ESQOX

SECONDED BY: CHIEF DONALD SAM, ?AKISQNUK FIRST NATION

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations in British Columbia (B.C.) are on the frontlines of the climate emergency, facing increasing drought, flooding, wildfire, ecosystem disruption, and water insecurity, all of which threaten inherent Title and Rights, cultural continuity, food systems, and responsibilities to future generations;
- B. glaciers are disappearing rapidly due to climate change. The United Nations declared 2025 the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation (IYGP), and established 2025-2034 as the Decade of Action for Cryospheric Science as a global effort to enhance research and drive urgent action to protect Earth's frozen areas for billions of people, including Indigenous peoples, who rely on them for survival;
- C. B.C. is home to approximately 18,100 glaciers, which are significantly impacted by climate change, decreased snowpack, and rising temperatures leading to altered streamflow timing, declining water quality and availability, increased water temperatures, and heightened geohazard risks;
- D. seasonal snowpack and glacier-fed systems are critical freshwater sources for many First Nations communities and ecosystems, yet there is currently no consolidated, publicly accessible provincial

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analysis that identifies the First Nations that rely on glaciers and snowpack for drinking water, food sovereignty and cultural identity;

- E. research, monitoring systems, and data collection on glacier and snowpack retreat in B.C., especially concerning small glaciers and localized areas, show significant gaps. Furthermore, current initiatives often fail to meaningfully engage First Nations, exacerbating existing challenges in stewarding and managing water sources while adapting to potential long-term water scarcity scenarios;
- F. 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 Province of B.C., 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 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(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired;

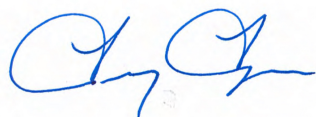
(2): Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired;

(3): States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.

Article 39: Indigenous peoples have the right to have access to financial and technical assistance from States and through international cooperation, for the enjoyment of the rights contained in this Declaration;

- G. glaciers and headwaters hold spiritual, cultural and ecological significance for First Nations in B.C., forming part of living systems governed under First Nations laws, knowledge systems and stewardship responsibilities;
- H. there is an urgent need for a First Nations-led, rights-based approach to glacier and snowpack-related water security that centers Title and Rights holders in governance, data sovereignty, stewardship planning, and long-term resilience strategies; and

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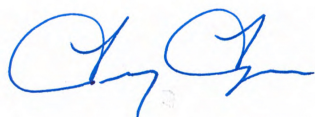
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- I. BCAFN Resolution 05/2021 mandates the Regional Chief to support community-led climate leadership, and BCAFN Resolution 06/2022 endorses the First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan. The Strategy's pathway Land and Water Protection, Theme 3.2 aims to ensure respect and recognition of First Nations water governance and authority to steward and manage water sources and protect natural water ecosystems.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly declare their support for the United Nations Decade of Action for Cryospheric Science (2025-2034) and call on the Federal and Provincial Governments to increase global efforts in alignment with the United Nations by strengthening international cooperation and allocating financial resources to expand and support First Nations-led research initiatives annually, monitoring systems and mitigation actions focused on glaciers and snowpack loss and the resulting impacts on long-term water availability, biodiversity, food security, First Nations culture and spirituality and the rights and responsibilities of First Nations in BC;
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly mandate BCAFN to work with interested First Nations in British Columbia and domestic and/or international like-minded organizations to explore, develop, and advance a First Nations-led Glaciers, Snowpack, and Water Security Initiative aimed to:
 - Enhance or develop First Nations stewardship frameworks for glaciers and freshwater, including data collection, monitoring systems, and policy reform to ensure resilience against the short and long-term impacts from glaciers, ice and snowpack loss; and
 - Strengthen collaboration between First Nations and Indigenous peoples worldwide affected by glacier retreat to share knowledge, data, and best practices, while advocating for meaningful global efforts to combat climate change; and
3. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call on the Federal and Provincial Government, universities, and non-governmental organizations to meaningfully engage First Nations to uphold rights, knowledge and governance systems when doing cryospheric-related research and/or policy development and establish partnerships with rights-holders when conducting projects in their unceded territories.

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Resolution 03/2026

SUBJECT: ALLOCATION OF FIRST NATIONS EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE FUNDING

MOVED BY: KUKPI7 HELEN HENDERSON, TSQÉSCEN' FIRST NATION

SECONDED BY: CHIEF JERRY JACK, MOWACHAHT/MUCHALAHT FIRST NATION

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations peoples have always maintained jurisdiction over the care, teachings, and responsibility of their children, including the design, delivery, and administration of early learning and child care programs and services in their communities;
- B. 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 B.C., passed legislation committing to implement, affirms:

Article 14(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

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.

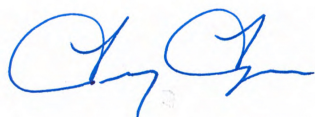
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Article 23: Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development, including in matters relating to education and child care;

- C. BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly have, through Resolution 14/2017 “Mandate the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society as Regional Lead Agency in National Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework Development and Implementation”, expressed support for the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS) as the regional lead agency in the ongoing development and implementation of a regional Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) strategy and have, through Resolution 31/2022 “First Nations Early Learning and Child Care”, called on the provincial and federal governments to 1) work with the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), supported by BCACCS, to immediately create an interim framework to flow funding under the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CW-ELCC) to First Nations, and 2) engage in Government-to-Government dialogue with the proper title and rights holders regarding a “permanent funding arrangement” for ELCC dollars available under the CW-ELCC;
- D. in 2022–23, the FNLC worked with BCACCS and the Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC) to confirm that MECC distribute approximately \$35 million in combined CW ELCC funding and provincial funding directly to all 204 First Nations as “One-Time Only” grants, and again in 2024–2025, that MECC distribute approximately \$35 million in combined 2023–24 and 2024–25 C-W ELCC funding directly to all 204 First Nations as “One-Time Only” grants;
- E. MECC has identified approximately \$16.5 million in CW ELCC funding for the 2025–26 fiscal year that must be allocated by March 31, 2026, but may be expended in future fiscal years, which is a significantly smaller amount of funding than was available in fiscal year 2022–23;
- F. BCACCS has recommended that this 2025–26 funding be transitioned from “One-Time Only” grants to being advanced to BCACCS to be held in trust, with no administrative costs, and allocated in support of four or five major capital projects in First Nations communities in the 2026–27 and 2027–28 fiscal years, using BCACCS’ existing First Nations-led capital funding policy;
- G. BCACCS has demonstrated experience and capacity in supporting an equity-based approach to First Nations ELCC capital planning, feasibility, design, and construction, has highlighted a planned reduction in provincial and federal funding for capital starting in 2027-28, and has identified that holding funds in trust would support a strategic approach to prioritizing Nations with limited existing ELCC infrastructure and capacity;
- H. FNLC, acting in collaboration with BCACCS and the First Nations Education Steering Committee and with provincial and federal governments under the Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding on First Nations ELCC endorsed by BCAFN Resolution 20/2023, is exploring

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options for long-term funding arrangements for ELCC to bring forward to title and rights holders for review and direction; and

- I. The recommendation from BCACCS represents a shift in funding allocation, from direct distribution of the CW ELCC funds to all 204 First Nations, to an allocation of a reduced amount to BCACCS to advance four or five major capital projects as a part of a broader investment strategy.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly support the advancement of the identified approximately \$16.5 million in Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) funding to the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society to be held in trust and allocated in support of a few major capital projects in B.C. First Nations communities commencing in 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 fiscal years, for priority access for those First Nations who have not been able to secure this funding to date, in accordance with BCACCS' First Nations-led capital funding policy, and then evenly distribute the remaining funding among all First Nations in B.C.; and
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief, working with the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the First Nations Summit as the First Nations Leadership Council, to work with the Ministry of Education and Child Care, and the B.C. Aboriginal Child Care Society, to advocate for the timely advancement of the funding in a manner that respects First Nations jurisdiction, equity, and long-term infrastructure needs, as directed by title and rights holders.

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BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
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Resolution 04/2026

SUBJECT: **OPPOSITION TO AMENDING THE DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ACT OR INTERPRETATION ACT**

Moved BY: **CHIEF JERRY JACK, MOWACHAHT/MUCHALAHT FIRST NATION**

SECONDED BY: **KUKPI7 ROSANNE CASIMIR, TK'EMLUPS TE SECWÉPEMC**

DECISION: **CARRIED**

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations, in what is now known as British Columbia (BC), are sovereign peoples and nations with constitutional and inherent, human, and Aboriginal title and rights and treaty rights with our own laws, governance systems, and jurisdictions that pre-exist and continue regardless of Crown laws and assertions of authority;
- B. the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) is an international human rights instrument that affirms the minimum standards necessary for the survival, dignity, and well-being of Indigenous peoples, and does not create new rights but affirms longstanding, broadly accepted, and existing international human rights norms;
- C. the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada called upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments and institutions to fully adopt and implement the UN Declaration as the framework for reconciliation;
- D. the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act) was co-developed with First Nations and was unanimously passed by the BC Legislature in November 2019 and

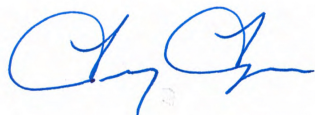
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affirms the application of the UN Declaration to the laws of BC, requires the government of BC to take all measures necessary to ensure the laws of BC are consistent with the UN Declaration, establishes processes for action planning and reporting, and enables BC to enter into joint decision-making agreements with Indigenous Governing Bodies;

- E. the *Interpretation Act* was amended by the BC Legislature in November 2021 to enact Section 8.1(3) which provides that every act and regulation (each as defined in the Interpretation Act) must be construed as being consistent with the UN Declaration;
- F. the UN Declaration, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of BC, passed legislation committing to implement, affirms:
Article 1: Indigenous peoples have the right to the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognized in international human rights law;
Article 2: Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from discrimination in the exercise of their rights;
Article 3: Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination;
Article 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights;
Article 19: States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with Indigenous peoples in order to obtain their free, prior, and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them;
Article 38: States in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples, shall take the appropriate measures, including legislative measures, to achieve the ends of this Declaration;
Article 40: Indigenous peoples have the right to access to and prompt decision through just and fair procedures for the resolution of conflicts and disputes with States; and
Article 43: The rights recognized in the Declaration constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity, and well-being of the Indigenous peoples of the world;
- G. in response to the BC Court of Appeal's decision in *Gitxaala v British Columbia (Chief Gold Commissioner)*, 2025 BCCA 430, the government of BC has proposed to amend the Declaration Act and/or the Interpretation Act, with amendments that would weaken and narrow their legal effect and justiciability and diminish the remedial role of the courts in their interpretation and application;
- H. the Attorney General of BC sent out notification letters to the 204 First Nations and the First Nations Leadership Council organizations, the Alliance of Modern Treaty Nations, and First Nations Organizations, on January 29th, 2026, informing them of the potential amendments and inviting participation in an expedited consultation and co-operation process and, subject to the signing of a confidentiality agreement, advising that they would be sharing a

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discussion paper and policy questions in advance of upcoming sessions for consultation and co-operation on the proposed amendments;

- I. on February 4th, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, BC Assembly of First Nations and First Nations Summit, working together as the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), held an Emergency All Chiefs meeting on the proposed amendments, where Chiefs and leaders in attendance expressed deep opposition to the proposed amendments being considered in the Discussion paper, which most had only seen for the first time that same morning;
- J. on February 10th, the Province of BC held a virtual engagement session on the proposed amendments, where Chiefs and leaders in attendance again expressed profound opposition to the proposed amendments as outlined in the Province's Discussion paper and called for an immediate meeting between BC Chiefs and Premier David Eby which is scheduled for March 9th;
- K. on February 25th, Premier Eby, Minister Chandra Herbert and Attorney General Sharma met with the FNLC to discuss a proposal of the Premier's Office for a joint table for a possible "off ramp" for introduction of amendments to the Declaration Act that were to be introduced in the Spring Legislative Session. The proposal from BC includes the striking of a working group with terms of reference to consider alternative options to amendments to the Declaration Act;
- L. the FNLC informed the Premier's office that they would consider participation at the proposed working group under the caveat that participation would be without prejudice to opposition to amendments;
- M. on March 5th, Attorney General Sharma and Minister Chandra Herbert attended the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly disclosing the proposed joint table and set out basic parameters, scope of this work and accountability measures;
- N. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly have consistently and unequivocally supported the unqualified implementation, defence, and strengthening of the Declaration Act, including through BCAFN Resolutions including 32/2024 "Support for the FNLC intervention in challenge to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act," 17/2024 "Call for Municipalities to Implement the UN Declaration," 21/2022 "Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Action Plan," all of which collectively affirm that the Declaration Act must be protected, fully implemented, and not weakened or rolled back; and
- O. the Declaration Act and Section 8.1(3) of the Interpretation Act provide a critical backstop of certainty and stability for Indigenous peoples, Crown governments, investors, and the public by clearly affirming that reconciliation, human rights, and the rule of law must guide legislative and policy development and interpretation in BC.

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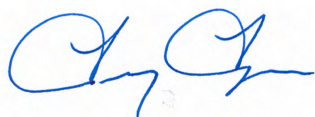


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THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly unequivocally opposes amendments to the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act) and to the *Interpretation Act* (Interpretation Act) the Province of BC is proposing in response to the BC Court of Appeal's decision in *Gitxaala v British Columbia (Chief Gold Commissioner)*, 2025 BCCA 430 (*Gitxaala*);
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly calls on the Province of BC to immediately withdraw their application for leave to the Supreme Court of Canada to appeal *Gitxaala*, a decision that affirms that the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) is positive and justiciable law in BC;
3. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly affirms that the Declaration Act must remain a stable, rights-affirming framework for reconciliation and that the focus of the Province must be on full, unqualified implementation and consistency with the UN Declaration, not legislative retreat, revision or judicial restriction;
4. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly calls upon the government of BC to publicly commit to not amending the Declaration Act or Interpretation Act in response to the BC Court of Appeal's decision in *Gitxaala*, and instead dedicate its efforts to meaningful implementation, alignment of laws, independent oversight, and accountability consistent with the UN Declaration and BCAFN resolutions; and directs the Regional Chief and BCAFN to continue working with the Province to advocate for a solution that fully upholds First Nations inherent and Aboriginal rights, title and jurisdiction and the UN Declaration and any solution or framework must be presented and disclosed to BC First Nations for their free, prior and informed consent;
5. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the Regional Chief and staff to continue working with First Nations, and with the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the First Nations Summit as the First Nations Leadership Council, and like-minded organizations to defend the integrity of the Declaration Act and relevant parts of the Interpretation Act, and oppose any actions that would erode the inherent, human, and Aboriginal title, rights and treaty rights of First Nations in BC and engage in planning direct action as needed; and
6. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the Regional Chief and staff to continue working with First Nations, and with the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the First Nations Summit as the First Nations Leadership Council, to participate with the Province of BC in the joint table to develop progressive solutions that will avoid the proposed amendments set out in the BC Discussion paper and appendix.

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Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief



BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
March 4 & 5, 2026
In person & online via Zoom

OMNIBUS Resolution 05/2026

SUBJECT: OMNIBUS RESOLUTION TO ADOPT SIX RESOLUTIONS

Moved BY: CHIEF JERRY JACK, MOWACHAHT/MUCHALAHT FIRST NATION

SECONDED BY: CHIEF JOHN POWELL, MAMALIKULLA FIRST NATION

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. Upon review of the draft resolutions, it was determined that six (6) of the resolutions were fisheries-related resolutions that the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) Chiefs-in-Assembly could support via an omnibus resolution.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BC Assembly of First Nations Chiefs-in-Assembly hereby adopt the following resolutions:

Number	Resolution Title
5(a)/2026	REQUIRE MEANINGFUL CONSULTATION ON AQUACULTURE REGULATIONS, LICENCE CONDITIONS AND CLOSE CONTAINMENT DEFINITIONS
5(b)/2026	REJECT THE USE OF "SEMI-OPEN" FISH FARMS AS ACCEPTABLE TRANSITION TECHNOLOGY

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5(c)/2026	DEMAND FEDERAL RELEASE OF "WHAT WE HEARD REPORT" AND RESTART OF THE OPEN NET PEN TRANSITION PLANNING PROCESS
5(d)/2026	REBUILDING WILD SALMON AS A NATION BUILDING PROJECT
5(e)/2026	CALL TO BAN TRAWLING IN PACIFIC COASTAL WATERS
5(f)/2026	IMMEDIATE REMOVAL OF OPEN PEN NET FISH FARMS FROM THE PACIFIC COAST

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Resolution 05(a)/2026

**SUBJECT: REQUIRE MEANINGFUL CONSULTATION ON AQUACULTURE REGULATIONS,
LICENCE CONDITIONS, AND CLOSED CONTAINMENT DEFINITIONS**

MOVED BY:

SECONDED BY:

DECISION:

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations in British Columbia are inherent and constitutionally protected title and rights holders with jurisdiction over their lands, waters, and resources, and continue to exercise Indigenous laws, governance, and stewardship responsibilities to protect wild salmon, marine ecosystems, and the well-being of their communities;
- B. the regulation, licensing, and management of industrial aquaculture directly affects First Nations' Aboriginal and treaty rights, including food, social, ceremonial, cultural, and economic practices, and therefore engages the Crown's duty to consult and accommodate;
- 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 Province of B.C., 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.

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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, territories, and resources.

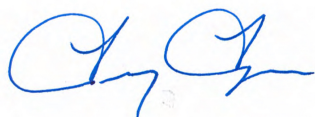
Article 32: States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with Indigenous peoples in order to obtain their free, prior, and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands, territories, or resources;

- D. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is advancing work in 2026 on aquaculture regulations, licence conditions, and the transition to closed containment, and has developed multiple technical definitions of “closed containment” and related containment categories for industry reporting and policy purposes without meaningful consultation with First Nations;
- E. DFO currently utilizes several differing definitions of closed containment, including categories such as semi-enclosed containment that have previously been rejected by First Nations, and these definitions risk predetermining policy outcomes, transition pathways, and licence conditions without First Nations’ free, prior, and informed consent;
- F. DFO has indicated that consultations on new or amended aquaculture regulations, licence conditions, and closed containment approaches will take place in 2026, and past engagement processes have failed to adequately reflect First Nations’ positions, Indigenous knowledge, or the cumulative impacts of fish farms on wild salmon and First Nations' rights; and
- G. consultation that is rushed, under-resourced, overly technical, or conducted after key policy decisions are predetermined does not meet the constitutional duty to consult, is inconsistent with the UN Declaration, and undermines trust in federal decision-making.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly affirms that meaningful consultation on aquaculture regulations, licence conditions, and the definition, standards, and application of closed containment must occur prior to final decision-making, must be conducted in good faith, and must be consistent with inherent and constitutionally protected Indigenous title and rights, laws, and governance systems;
2. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly calls upon Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to ensure that upcoming consultations on aquaculture regulations and licence conditions:
 - a) are early, ongoing, and transparent, with draft materials shared well in advance;
 - b) include First Nations-led and regionally appropriate engagement processes;
 - c) meaningfully incorporate Indigenous knowledge, independent science, and cumulative effects analysis; and
 - d) provide adequate funding and capacity support to enable full First Nations participation;

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e) include direct consultation on how DFO defines, categorizes, and applies the term “closed containment” and other containment models in regulations, policy, and licence conditions;

3. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly asserts that consultation on regulations and licence conditions must not be used to legitimize predetermined outcomes, including the continuation of open net-pen fish farms, the advancement of semi-enclosed or other unproven interim technologies, or the adoption of closed containment definitions that have not been co-developed with First Nations, and must uphold the precautionary principle and wild salmon recovery objectives; and
4. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the BCAFN and staff to work with First Nations, the First Nations Wild Salmon Alliance, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and First Nations Summit as the First Nations Leadership Council, and other like-minded organizations to seek funding from DFO and others to design a First Nations consultation and engagement process through a First Nations world view that respects and reflects First Nations rights, that informs and directs the Aquaculture Regulation Licence Conditions and Closed Containment Definitions, review, and for that process to create a First Nations driven Regulatory Impact Assessment Statement and a First Nations Socio Economic Impact Analysis Statement.

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BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
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Resolution 05(b)/2026

SUBJECT: REJECT THE USE OF "SEMI-OPEN" FISH FARMS AS ACCEPTABLE TRANSITION TECHNOLOGY

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Decision:

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations in British Columbia are inherent title and rights holders with jurisdiction over their territories, lands, and waters, and have a sacred responsibility to protect salmon and marine ecosystems through independent and First Nations-led, science-based, precautionary decision-making;
- B. First Nations rely on marine resources in the ocean and rivers for their livelihoods, way of life, health, culture, and well-being, and have a sacred responsibility to protect salmon and marine ecosystems for present and future generations;
- C. open net-pen fish farming has long generated public concern due to its environmental and biological impacts, including the transmission of pathogens and diseases, elevated sea-lice infestations on juvenile salmon, discharge of untreated waste, and increased predation pressures on forage fish;
- D. so-called "semi-open," "semi-closed," or flow-through containment systems continue to discharge waste, pathogens, parasites, and effluent into surrounding waters and therefore do not meet the independent, First Nations-led, science-based precautionary standard required for wild salmon

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protection and recovery, nor meaningfully reduce risks to marine ecosystems or First Nations title and rights;

- 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 Province of B.C., passed legislation committing to implement, affirms:

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, territories, and resources.

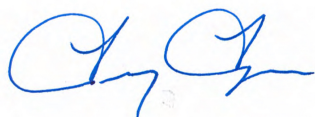
Article 32: Indigenous peoples have the right to determine priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands, territories, and resources;

- F. the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard's decision to decline renewal of Discovery Islands fish farm licenses, and the Federal Court's 2024 affirmation of that decision, confirmed the appropriateness of applying a precautionary approach grounded in an independent science base and First Nations knowledge where scientific uncertainty and risk of serious harm exist; and
- G. the federal government has committed to banning open net-pen fish farms in British Columbia waters by 2029 yet continues to advance transition pathways and implementation measures that risk prolonging exposure of wild salmon to industrial aquaculture through interim technologies that lack proven effectiveness.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly rejects the use of "semi-open," "semi-closed," or flow-through fish farm systems as acceptable transition technologies, as they fail to meet the independent, First Nations-led, science-based precautionary principle affirmed through the Discovery Islands decision and Federal Court ruling, and continue to pose unacceptable risks to wild salmon, marine ecosystems, and inherent and constitutionally protected First Nations title and rights;
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly reaffirms support for a rapid, precautionary, and First Nations-led transition away from open net-pen aquaculture to land-based closed-containment systems, where aquaculture is to occur at all, and only with the free, prior, and informed consent of affected First Nations;
3. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly calls upon the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia to cease promoting, funding, or approving semi-open containment systems within fish farm transition planning and to ensure that all implementation work between now and 2029 is aligned with wild salmon recovery objectives, Indigenous law, independent science, and the UN Declaration; and
4. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the BCAFN and staff to advocate, in collaboration with First Nations, the First Nations Wild Salmon Alliance, and like-minded organizations, for transition

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policies and legislation grounded in precautionary science, Indigenous knowledge, and independent First Nations oversight, subject to available resources.

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Resolution 05(c)/2026

SUBJECT: DEMAND FEDERAL RELEASE OF THE “WHAT WE HEARD REPORT” AND RESTART OF THE OPEN NET PEN TRANSITION PLANNING PROCESS

MOVED BY:

SECONDED BY:

DECISION:

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations in British Columbia are inherent title and rights holders with jurisdiction over their lands, waters, and resources, and continue to exercise Indigenous laws and stewardship responsibilities to protect wild salmon, marine ecosystems, and the well-being of their communities;
- B. the regulation and management of open net-pen fish farms directly affects First Nations' Aboriginal and treaty rights across the province, including food, social, ceremonial, cultural, and economic practices, and therefore engages the Crown's constitutional duty to consult and accommodate;
- 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 Province of B.C., 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.

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

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

Article 32: Indigenous peoples have the right to determine priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands, territories, and resources;

- D. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) initiated an Open Net-Pen Fish Farm Transition Planning Process and conducted engagement with First Nations and the public, committing to transparency and trust-building through the release of a “What We Heard Report”;
- E. despite these commitments, ISED and DFO have failed to publicly release the most recent “What We Heard Report,” undermining transparency, accountability, and confidence in the transition planning process; and
- F. consultation processes that proceed without full disclosure of engagement outcomes, or that continue despite unresolved concerns about transparency, scientific integrity, and misrepresentation of First Nations views, cannot be considered meaningful or consistent with the UN Declaration or the honour of the Crown.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly demands that the Government of Canada through Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada immediately release the outstanding “What We Heard Report” related to the Open Net-Pen Fish Farm Transition Planning Process, without redaction of First Nations positions or conclusions;
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly calls for the restart of the Open Net-Pen Transition Planning Process following the public release of the “What We Heard Report,” to ensure transparency, accountability, and trust in the process;
3. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly asserts that any restarted transition planning process must be grounded in the precautionary principle, independent and credible science, Indigenous knowledge, and full respect for First Nations inherent and constitutionally protected title and rights, and jurisdiction, and must not advance predetermined outcomes; and
4. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the BCAFN and staff to advocate to federal decision-makers, in collaboration with First Nations and like-minded organizations, for a transparent, rights-based, and First Nations-led transition planning process.

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Resolution 05(d)/2026

SUBJECT: REBUILDING WILD SALMON AS A NATION BUILDING PROJECT

Moved BY:

SECONDED BY:

DECISION:

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations in British Columbia are inherent title and rights holders with jurisdiction over their lands, waters, and resources, and have governed, stewarded, and sustained wild salmon since time immemorial through Indigenous laws, knowledge systems, and responsibilities to future generations;
- B. wild Pacific salmon are foundational to First Nations cultures, food systems, economies, governance, and spiritual practices, and their continued decline represents an unjustified infringement on First Nations' food, social, and ceremonial rights and a failure of Crown stewardship obligations;
- C. the ongoing collapse of wild salmon stocks is a direct result of cumulative impacts including habitat degradation, climate change, ineffective fisheries management, industrial development, aquaculture, and failure to uphold inherent and constitutionally protected Indigenous title and rights, and jurisdiction across watersheds and marine environments;
- D. the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia have made repeated political commitments to reconciliation, implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, food security, climate resilience, and watershed security, all of which are inextricably linked to the protection and rebuilding of wild salmon populations;

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- 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 Province of B.C., 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.

Article 25: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise used lands, waters, and resources.

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, territories, and resources.

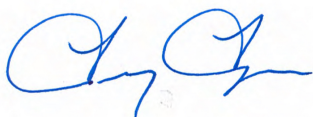
Article 32: Indigenous peoples have the right to determine priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands, territories, and resources;

- F. for First Nations, wild salmon are living relatives central to culture, law, and identity, and because salmon depend entirely on the health of lands and waters to which First Nations hold inherent title and rights, there can be no meaningful reconciliation without reconciliation to the land and the restoration of the ecosystems that sustain First Nations cultures and ways of life;
- G. reconciliation cannot be meaningfully advanced while wild salmon continue to decline, watersheds remain degraded, and First Nations are excluded from decision-making over the ecosystems that sustain their Nations, cultures, and economies;
- H. rebuilding wild salmon populations presents a unique opportunity to advance Nation-to-Nation governance, Indigenous-led watershed and marine stewardship, climate adaptation, food security, and long-term economic resilience in ways that benefit both First Nations and all British Columbians; and
- I. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly has consistently affirmed through numerous resolutions the urgent need for Indigenous-led wild salmon recovery, protection of salmon habitat, watershed security, co-governance of water, and sustained long-term investment in salmon restoration, including through calls for trust funds, oversight mechanisms, and First Nations leadership in salmon governance.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly affirms that rebuilding wild Pacific salmon must be advanced as a Nation Building project, led by First Nations, grounded in First Nations laws and knowledge, and recognized as essential to reconciliation, food security, climate resilience and adaptation, and long-term sustainability;
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly calls upon the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia to formally recognize wild salmon recovery as a core Nation-to-Nation priority, requiring coordinated, long-term, and First Nations-led action across fisheries management,

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habitat protection, watershed governance, and climate adaptation including rebuilding stocks where conditions have removed them from waterways;

3. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly asserts that meaningful rebuilding of wild salmon populations must include First Nations jurisdiction and decision-making authority, co-governance structures, and alignment with First Nations laws, key case law, the UN Declaration, and commitments to food sovereignty and water security; and
4. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the BCAFN and staff to advocate, in collaboration with First Nations, the B.C. Assembly of First Nations and the First Nations Summit as the First Nations Leadership Council, the First Nations Wild Salmon Alliance, and like-minded organizations, for a comprehensive, First Nations-led wild salmon rebuilding strategy that reflects the scale, urgency, and Nation Building significance of the crisis.

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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



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BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
March 4 & 5, 2026
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Resolution 05(e)/2026

SUBJECT: CALL TO BAN TRAWLING IN PACIFIC COASTAL WATERS

MOVED BY:

SECONDED BY:

DECISION:

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations in British Columbia hold inherent and constitutionally protected rights, title and jurisdiction over their lands, waters and marine territories as affirmed by First Nations' laws, legal orders and governance systems;
- B. Coastal First Nations in British Columbia rely on healthy marine ecosystems to sustain food sovereignty in addition to governance systems, cultural and spiritual well-being, climate, and economic resilience;
- C. Section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982 recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and Treaty rights, including rights related to fisheries, food security, cultural practices, and economic livelihoods;
- D. 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 Province of British Columbia, committed to implement, affirms:
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,

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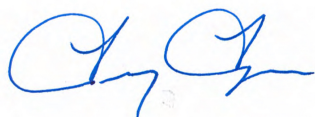
Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief

territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard; and

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. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination;

- E. The United Nations Declaration Act Action Plan, includes 11 fisheries-related actions, including: #37: Enhance collaborative tools agreements and transparent approaches to better deliver on the collaborative design, development, delivery and management of fisheries as well as conservation and protection of fish habitat; and #38: Provide predictable and flexible funding to ensure Indigenous nations and organizations have the capacity to meaningfully participate in advisory, co-management, and decision-making processes tied to aquatic resources and oceans management;
- F. Trawling, both midwater and bottom, is a fishing practice involving dragging heavy nets across the ocean floor to catch fish and other marine organisms, causing significant and often irreversible damage to marine ecosystems, including overfishing and the destruction of sensitive habitats. As a result, it leads to biodiversity loss and poses a serious threat to the long-term fisheries sustainability;
- G. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) regulates commercial trawling in B.C. Publicly available spatial data from DFO regarding the trawl footprint in B.C. is often cited as outdated, with the last official comprehensive layer ending in 2016;
- H. Trawling is recognized as a major source of carbon emissions contributing to ocean acidification and climate change. It is estimated that mobile bottom fishing disturbs 2.1 Mt of carbon annually in the Canadian Pacific;
- I. The protection and restoration of Pacific Coastal marine ecosystems are vital to addressing the climate crisis, securing intergenerational food security, and upholding First Nations' rights and responsibilities to future generations.
- J. The Council of the Haida Nation passed Resolution 2024-06, which calls for the elimination of trawling in Haida Gwaii waters in 2024;
- K. Old Massett Village Council, as a community of the Haida Nation and rights and title holder within Haida territory, affirms that Haida Gwaii waters are central to Haida governance, cultural continuity, and the exercise of inherent stewardship responsibilities grounded in Haida law and legal orders; and
- L. For Old Massett and the broader Haida Nation, food sovereignty encompasses the right and

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responsibility to harvest, access, manage, and protect marine resources in accordance with Haida values, laws, and intergenerational obligations, ensuring the availability of traditional foods that sustain community health, identity, and cultural practices;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly acknowledge the risks to community food security and resilience arising from destructive fishing practices and support First Nations' authority to take necessary measures to safeguard marine resources and traditional food systems;
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call upon the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada to:
 - i. Immediately ban midwater and bottom trawling in B.C.'s Pacific Coastal waters, and;
 - ii. provide meaningful co-development of marine management policies consistent with the UN Declaration and related provincial and federal legislation, including mechanisms for First Nations' free, prior and informed consent before authorizing any commercial and industrial fishing practices.
 - iii. work with rights and title holders to urgently implement all fisheries-related Action Plan Measures in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan* by 2028;
3. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief to advocate for legislative, regulatory and policy reforms necessary to eliminate destructive fishing practices, including midwater and bottom trawling, in partnership with impacted First Nations;
4. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call for urgent federal and provincial investment in Marine Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas, as well as First Nations-led habitat restoration, monitoring and First Nations guardians programs to support the recovery of impacted marine ecosystems;
5. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call upon the federal and provincial governments to engage in meaningful nation-to-nation dialogue with the Haida Nation and impacted communities to ensure that marine management decisions uphold First Nations' free, prior and informed consent and prioritize First Nations-led conservation and fisheries governance; and
6. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call for increased investment in First Nations-led marine monitoring, Guardians programs, and data sovereignty initiatives to strengthen stewardship and long-term protection of marine ecosystems affected by trawling.

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BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
March 4 & 5, 2026
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Resolution 5(f)/2026

SUBJECT: IMMEDIATE REMOVAL OF OPEN PEN NET FISH FARMS FROM THE PACIFIC COAST

MOVED BY:

SECONDED BY:

DECISION:

- A. the United Nations adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration), which affirms Indigenous Peoples' rights to self-determination (Article 3), to maintain and strengthen their spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned waters and resources (Article 25), and to conserve and protect the environment and productive capacity of their lands, territories, and resources (Article 29);
- B. the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act) was co-developed with First Nations and was unanimously passed by the BC Legislature in November 2019 and affirms the application of the UN Declaration to the laws of BC, requires the government of BC to take all measures necessary to ensure the laws of BC are consistent with the UN Declaration;
- C. the Government of Canada has committed to implementing the UN Declaration through the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act;
- D. both Canada and British Columbia have made repeated publicly committed to reconciliation, implementation of the UN Declaration, environmental protection, and the protection and enhancement of wild Pacific salmon for future generations;

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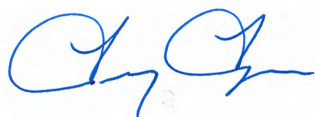
Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief

- E. wild Pacific salmon are foundational to the culture, governance, food security, economy, governance and inherent rights of the Hesquiaht people since time immemorial;
- F. open net pen Atlantic salmon aquaculture operations operating in Pacific waters pose ecological risks to wild salmon, including disease transfer, sea lice amplification, and ecosystem impacts;
- G. BCAFN Resolutions 2017-16, 2018-13 and 2020-03 have confirmed BCAFN's commitments to work in solidarity with like-minded organizations with respect to fisheries and aquaculture issues and to advocate for the transition away from open-net pen aquaculture in favour of more humane and sustainable practices;
- H. the Government of Canada previously committed to transition away from open net pen salmon farming in British Columbia waters, and that commitment has not yet been fully realized and through Fisheries and Oceans Canada, has identified the protection and rebuilding of wild salmon as a priority;
- I. commercial fishing vessels are legally required to install and pay for independent monitoring systems to record and verify their harvest and catch activities;
- J. fairness, transparency, conservation, and reconciliation require that aquaculture operators be held to monitoring standards equal to or greater than those imposed upon Indigenous and commercial harvesters; and
- K. neighbouring First Nations whose territories and marine ecosystems are directly impacted by open net pen fish farms have the inherent right to transparency, environmental protection, and access to information affecting their territories and resources.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief to call upon the Governments of Canada and British Columbia for the immediate removal of all open net pen Atlantic salmon fish farms from the Pacific coast of British Columbia; and
2. pending full removal, the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief to call upon the Governments of Canada and British Columbia to ensure all open net pen Atlantic salmon aquaculture operations must be required to:
 - Immediately install continuous video monitoring systems to record all harvesting, transfer, and transportation of farmed Atlantic salmon;
 - Meet or exceed the monitoring standards imposed upon commercial fishing vessels;
 - Bear the full financial cost of installation, operation, maintenance, and oversight of such monitoring systems.


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Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief

3. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief to call upon the Governments of Canada and British Columbia to ensure all raw monitoring footage be made accessible, in real time or upon request, to neighbouring First Nations whose territories are impacted by these operations;
4. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief to demand Governments of Canada and British Columbia to ensure that aquaculture regulatory regimes are consistent with the UN Declaration and DRIPA, including the requirement for free, prior, and informed consent where activities impact Indigenous territories and marine resources; and
5. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief to formally call upon the Governments of Canada and British Columbia to take immediate legislative and regulatory action to remove open net pen fish farms from the Pacific coast.

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Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief



BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
March 4 & 5, 2026
In person & online via Zoom

Resolution 06/2026

SUBJECT: RENEWED COMMITMENT TO REFORMING THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ACT

MOVED BY: CHIEF JERRY JACK, MOWACHAHT/MUCHALAHT FIRST NATION

SECONDED BY: CHIEF GREG GABRIEL, PENTICTON INDIAN BAND

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

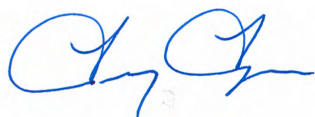
- A. First Nations hold inherent and constitutionally protected title, rights and treaty rights to their lands, waters, and resources, which cannot be delegated, overridden, or bypassed by federal or provincial governments, delegated agencies or advisory bodies;
- B. In 2019, the *Environmental Assessment Act* (EAA) came into force with a provision to review the EAA every 5 years. In 2024, the Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) began the review and announced that they are taking an incremental approach and it will be complete in late 2027;
- C. The EAO intends to evaluate whether the EAA is meeting the purposes of promoting sustainability and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in the Province of BC (BC) and is consistent with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) as required by the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act);

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- D. Following the implementation of the Declaration Act, BC amended the *Interpretation Act* to include Section 8.1, which requires that every Act and regulation “must be construed as being consistent with the Declaration” and that every enactment “must be construed as upholding and not abrogating or derogating from the aboriginal and treaty rights of Indigenous peoples as recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*”;
- E. The UN Declaration, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of BC, passed legislation committing to implement, affirms:
Article 1: Indigenous peoples have the right to the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognized in international human rights law;
Article 2: Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from discrimination in the exercise of their rights;
Article 3: Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination;
Article 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights;
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 38: States in consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples, shall take the appropriate measures, including legislative measures, to achieve the ends of this Declaration; and
Article 43: The rights recognized in the Declaration constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity, and well-being of the Indigenous peoples of the world;
- F. by BCAFN Resolution 04/2018 *Reforming the BC Environmental Assessment Act*, the BC Chiefs-in-Assembly supported a complete review and legislative reform of the EAA and urged BC to undertake this reform in consideration of First Nations title, rights and treaty rights in line with the Tsilhqot’in decision, the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and full implementation of the UN Declaration;
- G. as part of the 5-year review, and in compliance with the Interpretation Act, the EAO has engaged with the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, the BC Assembly of First Nations, and the First Nations Summit, working together as the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), on dispute resolution mechanisms in the EAA, and will be engaged in ongoing work to reform the EAA;
- H. In 2025, BC quickly passed fast-tracking legislation in the form of the *Renewable Energy Projects (Streamlined Permitting) Act* (Bill 14) and *Infrastructure Projects Act* (Bill 15), with the latter containing provisions to expedite the environmental assessment process, overriding the EAA.

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Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief

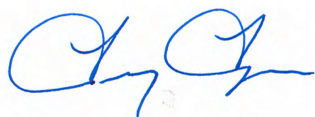
The bills were not developed in alignment with the Declaration Act or the Interpretation Act;

- I. by BCAFN Resolution 39/2025 *Call for the Repeal of Federal and Provincial Fast-Tracking Legislation*, the Chiefs-in-Assembly directed the Regional Chief and BCAFN staff, together with the FNLC, to develop a legal strategy to challenge Bill 14 and 15 (subject to resourcing), engage with the provincial and federal governments on scoping legislative amendments and regulatory co-development on fast-tracking legislation to reflect the rights, title and interests and priorities of First Nations in BC and seeks their free, prior and informed consent prior to any finalizations, and call on BC and Canada to provide adequate funding and timelines to ensure the full participation of First Nations in BC in co-development of any fast-tracking legislative amendments or regulatory developments;
- J. as a result of Bill 15, the EAA has also been mandated to develop regulations for an expedited environmental assessment process for “provincially significant projects,” and in the future they will focus on types of projects that should be assessment and ways to make the assessment process more efficient, while also working on approached to free, prior and informed consent and First Nations’ participation in environmental assessments; and
- K. in the engagements to date, the FNLC has remained steadfast under the direction of the Chiefs-in-Assembly to ensure that First Nations title, rights and inherent jurisdiction is respected, and that free, prior and informed consent and consultation mechanisms are embedded in any legislative amendments and related regulatory development.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly re-affirms the provincial government's legislative obligations to undertake a 5-year review process of the *Environmental Assessment Act* (EAA) that must ensure First Nations inherent title, rights and treaty rights are respected and upheld in full alignment with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act) and Section 8.1 of the *Interpretation Act*;
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the Regional Chief and BCAFN staff, working with the First Nations Summit and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, jointly as the First Nations Leadership Council, to continue monitoring and engaging with the Environmental Assessment Office to ensure that any amendments and regulatory developments to the EAA are aligned with the UN Declaration and uphold process that respect free, prior and informed consent and consultation and cooperation mechanisms; and
3. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call on the government of BC to provide adequate funding to meaningfully engage with rights and title holders in ensuring fast-tracking legislation and related regulatory, policy and legislative development or reform are aligned with the UN Declaration,

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Declaration Act and Section 8.1 of the Interpretation Act.

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BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
March 4 & 5, 2026
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Resolution 07/2026

SUBJECT: PROTECTIONS FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ANCESTRAL REMAINS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY IN THE *HERITAGE CONSERVATION ACT*

MOVED BY: KUKPI7 ROSANNE CASIMIR, TK'EMLUPS TE SECWÉPEMC

SECONDED BY: CHIEF JERRY JACK, MOWACHAHT/MUCHALAHT FIRST NATION

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. The existing Heritage Conservation Act (HCA) and associated management regime does not recognize aboriginal title and rights, nor does it adequately address the needs and interests of First Nations as it relates to their culture and heritage resources. The regulatory framework provided for in the HCA prevents First Nations from protecting our sacred sites, the sanctity of our artifacts and the remains of our ancestors in accordance with our traditional laws and customs;
- B. the UN Declaration, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, alongside the government of B.C. passed legislation committing to implement, affirms:
 - Article 11(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.
 - Article 11(2): States shall provide redress through effective mechanisms, which may

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Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief

include restitution, developed in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, with respect to their cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free, prior and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions and customs.

Article 12(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practice, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; and the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains.

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 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.

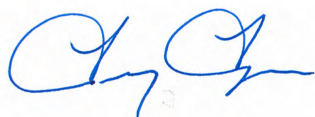
Article 31(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts.

Article 39: Indigenous peoples have the right to have access to financial and technical assistance from States and through international cooperation for the enjoyment of the rights contained in this Declaration.

Article 40: Indigenous peoples have the right to access to and prompt decision through just and fair procedures for the resolution of conflicts and disputes with States or other parties, as well as to effective remedies for all infringements of their individual and collective rights;

- C. the Province and First Nations created the *Joint Working Group on First Nations Heritage Conservation (JWGFNHC)* to identify issues, develop options, and recommend improvements to the HCA, including meaningful First Nations roles in heritage protection and the protection of cultural property and ancient human remains;
- D. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly supported the creation of the JWGFNHC through Resolution 2/2008, *Support for the Joint Working Group on First Nations Heritage Conservation*;
- E. the Province's *Heritage Conservation Act Transformation Project (HCATP)* commits to working with First Nations to reform the HCA in alignment with the UN Declaration, including shared decision-making, and improved protection of First Nations cultural heritage;

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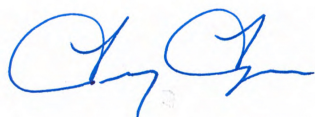
Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief

- F. T'kemplúps te Secwépemc has participated in engagement processes related to the HCATP, but this participation does not constitute free, prior, and informed consent with respect to the changes currently proposed; and
- G. T'kemplúps te Secwépemc and other First Nations have consistently affirmed that any update to the HCA must include clear protections for cultural heritage and ancestral remains found on private property and must provide financial support to First Nations and private landowners to address the significant administrative and financial burdens associated with identification, protection, and repatriation work.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly reminds the Province of BC of its obligations to reform the *Heritage Conservation Act* in a manner that fully aligns with the UN Declaration, including obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of First Nations before adopting legislative changes that affect their rights; and
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly calls upon the province to work collaboratively with First Nations to develop a solutions-focused framework in the HCA updates, including explicit provisions for:
 - the protection and management of Indigenous cultural heritage on privately owned land;
 - the repatriation and ceremonial care of ancestral remains; and
 - financial assistance to First Nations and private landowners to support the necessary work of identifying, protecting, and repatriating cultural heritage and ancestral remains found on private land.

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Resolution 08/2026

SUBJECT: ENDORSEMENT OF THE FNLC-FNHIC 2025 HOUSING FORUM WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

MOVED BY: CHIEF NICHOLAS PETERSON, LOWER NICOLA INDIAN BAND

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

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. Housing is an essential part of holistic wellness, belonging, and identity, however, First Nations continue to experience housing insecurity on and off reserve and continue to experience disproportionately high rates of homelessness;
- B. the fundamental human right to adequate housing is recognized in the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the 1966 *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, alongside *Canada's National Housing Strategy Act (2019)*;
- C. the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration), which the government of Canada has adopted without qualifications, and has, alongside the government of BC, passed legislation committing to implement, affirms:
Article 7(1): Indigenous individuals have the rights to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security of person.
Article 21(1): Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination to the improvement of

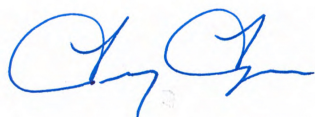
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their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security. Article 32(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources;

- D. the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), comprising the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN), the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) and the First Nations Summit (FNS) have jointly passed many housing related resolutions including BCAFN Resolutions 18/2017, 08/2024, and 12/2025; FNS Resolutions 0618.04, 1124.12, and 0425.15; and UBCIC Resolutions 2018-11, and 2024-53, calling for a system-wide reform of housing in BC and across Canada led by a by-First Nations, for-First Nations approach;
- E. the First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Council (FNHIC) was created by mandate from BC rights and title holders via BCAFN Resolution 18/2017, FNS Resolution 0618.04, and UBCIC Resolution 2018-11 which call for the creation of a housing and infrastructure organization that will provide authority and control to BC First Nations for all housing and infrastructure delivery in British Columbia;
- F. FNHIC administers housing, asset management and infrastructure related services, with 5 regional hubs in operation as well as the First Nations Housing Managers Association to provide First Nations capacity support on housing and infrastructure;
- G. BCAFN Resolution 08/2024 titled “Support and Endorsement for Phase 1 of the First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Council’s Housing Framework” supported the calls to action and recommendations contained within the 2023 Housing Forum What We Heard Report and supported the creation of the Chiefs Housing and Infrastructure Advisory Committee to be incorporated into FNHIC’s governance structure;
- H. BCAFN previously hosted province-wide forums on First Nations housing and homelessness in March 2009, March 2017, October 2023, and November 2024;
- I. on September 16 & 17 2025, the FNLC and the First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Council (FNHIC), co-hosted the 2025 FNLC-FNHIC housing and homelessness forum on the traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. Over 350 chiefs, leaders, housing technicians and community members attended the event and engaged in key dialogue on practical insights, community-driven solutions, and partnership ideas for challenging the complex and intersectional issues in First Nations housing;
- J. during the forum, First Nations affirmed their inherent rights, title, and self-determination over housing and infrastructure and emphasized the urgent need to strengthen internal governance, capacity, and financial independence as well as proactive local, provincial, and federal

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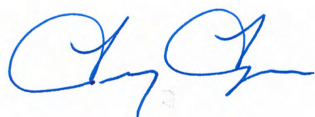
partnerships, shared decision making, and the need to align housing delivery with the principles of First Nations self-determination and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act), ensuring that First Nations lead in design, development, and management of their housing futures. This includes understanding the barriers that continue to slow momentum, such as funding and bureaucratic process delays; and

- K. the report makes 65 recommendations for First Nations, Local, Provincial and Federal Governments to implement to address a wide range of housing-related issues, including: Holistic and wellness-centric approaches to housing; practical approaches to housing delivery; Decolonized development processes; Supports for Housing Managers; Federal programming; Best practices in asset management and infrastructure development; and Municipal-First Nation partnerships;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly endorse the 2025 FNLC-FNHIC What We Heard Report and call on Regional Chief Teegee and encourage the Chiefs Housing and Infrastructure Advisory Committee to support the key recommendations and calls to action from the FNLC-FNHIC 2025 housing forum, as captured by the 2025 FNLC-FNHIC What We Heard Report, including calls for:
 - a. The Alignment of housing delivery with First Nations' right self-determination determination to ensure First Nations lead in the design, development, and management of their housing futures;
 - b. The Provincial reform of outdated legislation, including the *Local Government Act* and related policies to ensure alignment with the UN Declaration and Declaration Act and uphold First Nations' decision-making authority within their territories;
 - c. Urgent federal, provincial and municipal investments to secure equitable First Nations access to clean water, sewage, and housing infrastructure similar to surrounding municipalities;
 - d. The reform of federal housing programs to allow First Nations access to equity for on-reserve housing; and
 - e. The development of integrated support frameworks that address First Nations homelessness and support at-risk youth, women, and families, including those transitioning from care;
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct BCAFN Regional Chief Teegee to call upon the Government of Canada and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to:
 - a. honour the Crown's fiduciary obligations by making the necessary infrastructure investments to close the housing and infrastructure gap for First Nations, both on and off reserve.

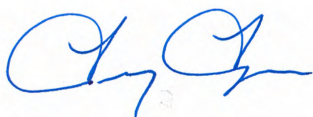
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- b. move from short-term, proposal-based funding to predictable, long-term, investment-style funding that supports First Nations-led initiatives, governance, and self-determination.
 - c. ensure that new federal entities, such as Build Canada Homes, are designed with the direct and ongoing participation of First Nations to reflect First Nations housing priorities, inherent rights, and the need for flexible funding models for remote and northern projects;
- 3. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct BCAFN Regional Chief Teegee to call upon the Province of BC to:
 - a. prioritize infrastructure readiness by making strategic investments in water, sewage, power, and internet connectivity to support housing development, particularly in northern and remote communities.
 - b. provide long-term, flexible funding that enables First Nations and municipalities to collaborate on housing and infrastructure planning that reflects First Nations worldviews and priorities; and
- 4. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct BCAFN Regional Chief Teegee to call upon BC municipalities to move beyond consultation to shared decision-making with First Nations by:
 - a. establishing formal agreements and prioritizing council-to-council meetings with neighboring First Nations
 - b. incorporating the Declaration Act in local housing and land policies, processes, and bylaws engaging in joint advocacy for equitable access to municipal infrastructure for neighbouring First Nations

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BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
March 4 & 5, 2026
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Resolution 09/2026

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FIRST NATIONS CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Moved BY: CHIEF DON SAM, ?AKISQNUK FIRST NATION

SECONDED BY: CHIEF JOHN POWELL, MAMALIKULLA FIRST NATION

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. British Columbia lacks a distinctions-based First Nations certification framework to verify the ownership and authenticity of First Nations' businesses, goods and services, limiting transparency and restricting advocacy for First Nations participation in provincial and federal procurement;
- B. First Nations in British Columbia (BC) are self-determining peoples with the inherent right to govern their own political, economic, and cultural systems, including verification mechanisms that protect First Nations' ownership, control, and authenticity in representation, commerce, and procurement;
- 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 BC, committed to implement, affirms:
Article 3: Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural

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development;

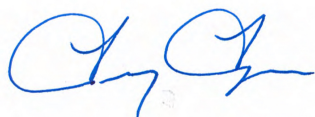
Article 4: Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions;

Article 20:1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic, and social systems or institutions, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities;

Article 31:1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions;

- D. the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) has consistently affirmed the advancement of First Nations rights and jurisdiction in BC through distinctions-based frameworks. BCAFN Resolution 28/2023 rejects any conflation of First Nations rights with other groups residing in BC and affirms that BC First Nations are rights holders under section 35 of the *Constitution Act*. BCAFN Resolution 06/2020 further recognizes the need to protect First Nations' knowledge and cultural expressions through First Nations-led intellectual property and authenticity frameworks;
- E. there is currently no distinctions-based First Nations certification program in BC that verifies ownership, control, and authenticity of First Nations businesses, goods, and services, limiting the ability of First Nations in BC to ensure that economic benefits, including procurement opportunities, are directed to First Nations;
- F. existing Indigenous certification models in BC and Canada are not distinctions-based, including all First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. The pan-Indigenous model conflates the distinct rights, governance systems, and economic identities of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. This approach prevents accurate tracking of First Nations participation in procurement, limits accountability for reconciliation-based spending, and obscures whether economic benefits are reaching First Nations rights holders in BC;
- G. advancing the development of the proposed distinctions-based First Nations Certification Program framework builds on BCAFN's existing policy advocacy and economic development work, including opportunities to increase First Nations participation in procurement identified through BC's Indigenous Procurement Initiative, currently under development; and
- H. a distinctions-based, First Nations certification program would enable rights and titleholders to advocate for establishing provincial and federal procurement targets specific to First Nations businesses, ensuring that economic reconciliation initiatives do not erode First Nations rights

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Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief

through pan-Indigenous or colonial classifications. Establishing a First Nations Certification Program will advance economic sovereignty, protect cultural and intellectual property, and assert First Nations jurisdiction within BC and Canada's distinctions-based frameworks.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief and BCAFN to develop a proposed framework for a distinctions-based First Nations Certification Program that verifies ownership, control, and authenticity of First Nations-led enterprises, goods, and services in British Columbia in collaboration with interested First Nations, relevant First Nations Organizations in BC;
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call upon Canada and BC to support and resource the development of a BC First Nations Certification Program framework and to establish distinctions-based procurement targets for First Nations businesses consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*; and
3. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief to report back to the next Assembly on progress toward the development of the First Nations Certification Program framework, including policy advocacy and funding opportunities that ensure the program remains First Nations-led and distinctions-based.

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Resolution 10/2026

SUBJECT: CALL FOR ESSENTIAL SERVICES DESIGNATION FOR HEALTH AND CULTURAL SERVICES FOR RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS AND INTERGENERATIONAL SURVIVORS

Moved by: KUKPI7 HELEN HENDERSON, TSQÉSCENĀ FIRST NATION

Seconded by: CHIEF MARIAH CHARLESON, HESQUIAHT FIRST NATION

Decision: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. Residential School Survivors' support organizations support First Nations that have been directly or indirectly impacted by Indian Residential Schools (IRS) and colonial systems to attain spiritual, emotional, cultural and physical healing that sustains their wellness and that of future generations;
- B. the emphasis on culture and culturally specific methods of dealing with complex trauma from the residential school system embodies traditional, holistic and First Nations responses which come from First Nations themselves. These services have paved the way for the expansion of First Nations-led health and cultural services, assisting First Nations for a variety of purposes;
- C. the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA), implemented in 2007, stands as one of the largest class-action settlements in Canadian history. Its primary purpose has been to address the harms caused by the residential school system, which operated for over a century and affected generations of First Nations across Canada. The IRSSA established a range of health and cultural support services for Survivors and their families, including the Indian Residential

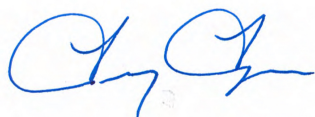
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Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief

Schools Resolution Health Program. These supports aimed to facilitate healing, promote cultural revitalization, and address intergenerational impacts;

- D. Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) funds a network of supports primarily delivered through contribution agreements. In British Columbia, there are 10 projects which have been funded to date, the largest and highest profile are the Tsoow-Len-Lum and the Indian Residential School Survivors Society (IRSSS). However, this program is now facing elimination since there is no formal commitment to extend funding beyond March 31, 2026, as the IRSSA did not establish funding for these programs on a permanent basis;
- E. essential service designation is outlined in the *Public Service Labour Relations Act*, and identifies services necessary to protect public health, safety and security. Essential service designation confirms stable, long-term funding to ensure reliable service delivery. In recent years, First Nations and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) have called for expanding essential service designation to areas such as First Nations Police Services on reserve due to informal and unpredictable funding agreements that risk the disruption of service for First Nations organizations;
- F. 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 BC committed to implementing, 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 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 24 (2): Indigenous individuals 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 of achieving progressively the full realization of this right;
- G. the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Calls to Action states that,
#18: We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties.
#21: We call upon the federal government to provide sustainable funding for existing and new Aboriginal healing centers to address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual

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harms caused by residential schools, and to ensure that the funding of healing centers in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories is a priority.

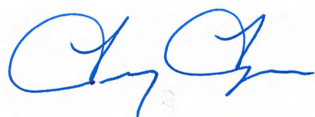
#23: We call upon all levels of government to:

- i. Increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the health-care field.
- ii. Ensure the retention of Aboriginal health-care providers in Aboriginal communities.
- iii. Provide cultural competency training for all healthcare professionals;

#22: We call upon those who can effect change within the Canadian health-care system to recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and Elders where requested by Aboriginal patients;

- H. the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' (National Inquiry) Calls for Justice 3.1, 3.2 and 3.6 call upon all levels of government to prioritize the unique needs of First Nations health and wellness that are accessible and culturally appropriate, while ensuring substantive equality of permanent funding for First Nations-led health services;
- I. the Final Report on the Missing and Disappeared Indigenous Children and Unmarked Burials in Canada, released by the Independent Special Interlocutor, Kimberly Murray, underscores the critical need for First Nations-led healing and health care for Survivors and their descendants, and calls for equitable-reform and long-term investment to ensure the permanent access of these services;
- J. AFN Resolution 24/2021, Call for the Permanency of the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program, calls on Canada to affirm its commitment to reconciliation by establishing a permanent and enhanced version of the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program, to meet the complex needs of IRS Survivors and their families, including the provision of appropriate healing support to address the ongoing effects of intergenerational trauma;
- K. these health and cultural services have recently become subject to cycles of short-term extensions, frequently realized at or near the end of the fiscal year. This uncertainty has negatively impacted support organizations to provide these services due to the inability for long-term assurance of funding;
- L. the current fiscal approach for Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) focuses on essential services as the basis for priority funding. Currently, organizations such as the Tsawtun Lelum Treatment Centre and the Indian Residential School Survivors Society (IRSSS) are not recognized as an essential service;
- M. the IRSSS reported a substantial cut in funding for the next fiscal year, which risks a disruption of critical, lifesaving services for First Nations in BC; and

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- N. IRS Survivors, Intergenerational Survivors and all First Nations continue to navigate the legacy of the residential school system, orchestrated as a colonial genocide to displace and disarm First Nations of their language, culture and inherent title and rights. First Nations today continue to face marginalization as a result of these colonial policies.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call on all levels of government to declare all health and cultural services for IRS Survivors and Intergenerational Survivors to be classified an essential service;
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call on Canada to fulfill the legislative and international obligation to address the critical and unique needs of First Nations by ensuring the permanent availability of health and cultural supports to uphold First Nations wellness holistically;
3. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call on ISC and CIRNAC to conduct a review of their obligations from recent class action settlements related to residential schools, day schools and Indian hospitals, and assure that health and cultural supports remain available for claimants on a permanent basis; and
4. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief and BCAFN staff to advocate in favour of equitable, sustainable and permanent funding to First Nations organizations who administer health and cultural services for IRS Survivors and Intergenerational Survivors and capital infrastructure funding.

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BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
March 4 & 5, 2026
In person & online via Zoom

Resolution 11/2026

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR NATION-DIRECTED NEGOTIATIONS PATHWAYS AND UPHOLDING GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS UNDER DRIPA

MOVED BY:

SECONDED BY:

DECISION: CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT (VOICE VOTE)

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations in what is now known as British Columbia (BC) are sovereign Indigenous Nations and inherent, human, and Aboriginal title and rights holders whose laws, governance systems, and jurisdiction pre-exist Crown assertions of authority and continue today;
- B. the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) affirms Indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination, participation in decision-making through their own representative institutions, and consultation and cooperation in good faith to obtain free, prior, and informed consent;
- C. the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act) establishes the UN Declaration as the framework for reconciliation in BC and requires the Province to take all measures necessary to ensure provincial laws and policies are consistent with the UN Declaration;
- D. the Declaration Act and related provincial reconciliation commitments contemplate collaborative governance, negotiated solutions, and government-to-government engagement with Indigenous Governing Bodies as central mechanisms for advancing

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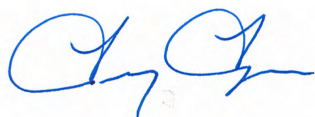
reconciliation;

- E. recent decisions of the BC courts, including *Cowichan Tribes v British Columbia*, 2025 BCSC 1490, and *Gitxaala v British Columbia* (Chief Gold Commissioner), 2025 BCCA 430, reaffirm the significant legal consequences arising where Indigenous rights, title, and participation in decision-making processes are not meaningfully addressed through lawful and collaborative approaches;
- F. those decisions reinforce that negotiated, good faith government-to-government engagement remains the most stable and effective pathway for advancing reconciliation, certainty, and responsible stewardship outcomes for First Nations, the Province, and the public;
- G. First Nations across BC have invested significant governance capacity, resources, and community direction into negotiated reconciliation processes and collaborative stewardship arrangements developed in reliance upon provincial commitments to Declaration Act implementation;
- H. Qwelmínte Secwépemc (QS) is a collective of respective Secwépemc communities working through historic divisional governance structures and Campfires to advance coordinated government-to-government negotiations, collaborative stewardship, and reconciliation initiatives with the Province of BC through the Skú7pecen's Journey Letter of Commitment (SJ LoC) and related agreements;
- I. negotiated pathways developed through such government-to-government arrangements have required significant structural adjustments, governance coordination, staffing investments, and long-term community planning undertaken in good faith reliance upon continuity of engagement;
- J. recent provincial decisions affecting established reconciliation and negotiations frameworks have created uncertainty regarding continuity of engagement, funding stability, and cross-ministry coordination necessary to support informed governance decision-making by Indigenous Nations;
- K. Forestry consultation and revenue sharing agreements (FCRSA), including related forestry revenue-sharing mechanisms, are arrangements between First Nations and the Province of BC that provide direct economic benefits and a structured consultation process for forestry operations; and
- L. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly have consistently affirmed that reconciliation must proceed through honourable Crown conduct, transparency, and sustained good faith negotiations consistent with the UN Declaration and the Declaration Act.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly affirm their support for First Nations advancing coordinated, Nation-directed negotiations and collaborative stewardship governance approaches consistent with inherent jurisdiction, collective decision-making structures, and

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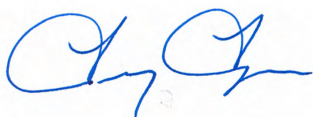


Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief

implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration);

2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly affirm that negotiated government-to-government pathways grounded in Indigenous governance systems remain a preferred and responsible mechanism for advancing reconciliation, stewardship certainty, and shared decision-making across British Columbia (BC);
3. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call upon the Province of BC to uphold its legal obligations to implementing the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act) by maintaining transparent, coordinated, and good faith engagement processes with Indigenous Governing Bodies and, where directed by rightsholders, regional collectives, including those operating through the Qwelminté Secwépemc Office Secretariat or other Nation-led coordination structures;
4. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call upon the Province of BC to maintain continuity of negotiated pathways and collaborative stewardship initiatives developed through existing government-to-government arrangements, including providing timely clarity, coordinated cross-ministry participation, and sufficient resourcing necessary to support informed First Nations leadership decision-making;
5. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call upon the Province of BC to uphold the honour of the Crown by ensuring that fiscal and administrative considerations do not undermine established reconciliation commitments, negotiated relationships, or the stability required for meaningful implementation of Declaration Act;
6. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief and BCAFN staff to advocate alongside affected First Nations and regional collectives to support negotiations processes that respect First Nations' governance structures and advance full and effective implementation of Declaration Act throughout BC; and
7. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call upon the Province of BC to ensure that forest consultation and revenue-sharing arrangements (related forestry revenue-sharing mechanisms) are not used as leverage or conditional pressure to compel First Nations to accept or sign administrative engagement frameworks or interim arrangements, and further call upon the Province of BC to maintain continuity and fairness in revenue-sharing while government-to-government negotiations are underway, consistent with the honour of the Crown, reconciliation objectives, and Declaration Act implementation.

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BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
March 4 & 5, 2026
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Resolution 12/2026

**SUBJECT: RENEWAL OF PROTOCOL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE FIRST NATIONS
LEADERSHIP COUNCIL AND THE NATIVE COURTWORKER AND COUNSELLING
ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

MOVED BY:

SECONDED BY:

DECISION: CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT (VOICE VOTE)

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations hold inherent rights to self-determination, including the right to maintain and strengthen their political, legal, social, and cultural institutions, as affirmed in Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration);
- B. the 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 2: Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their indigenous origin or identity.
 - Article 7(1): Indigenous individuals have the rights to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security of person;
 - (2): Indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and shall not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence, including forcibly removing children of the group to another group.

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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.

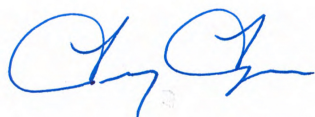
Article 37: Indigenous peoples have the right to the recognition, observance and enforcement of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements concluded with States or their successors and to have States honour and respect such treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements;

- C. on June 27, 2013, as mandated by Resolution 03(d)-2013, the BCAFN endorsed and entered into a Declaration and Protocol of Recognition, Support, Cooperation and Coordination (Protocol Agreement) with the Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of British Columbia (NCCABC), as part of the First Nations Leadership Council, alongside the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) and the First Nations Summit (FNS);
- D. the Protocol Agreement has supported collaboration between BCAFN and NCCABC on matters related to justice, advocacy, policy development, and the advancement of culturally appropriate services for First Nations peoples;
- E. the existing Protocol Agreement is expiring, and the continued renewal of this agreement is necessary to ensure continuity, stability, and effectiveness in the working relationship between BCAFN and NCCABC; and
- F. renewing the Protocol Agreement will reaffirm the shared commitment of BCAFN and NCCABC to work collaboratively in support of First Nations justice priorities and the well-being of First Nations individuals, families, and communities across British Columbia.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly formally supports the renewal of the Protocol Agreement between the First Nations Leadership Council and the Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of British Columbia (NCCABC) and directs the Regional Chief to sign and endorse the renewed Protocol Agreement on behalf of the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly; and
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the Regional Chief and staff to continue working collaboratively with NCCABC under the renewed Protocol Agreement and to provide updates to the Chiefs-in-Assembly as appropriate.

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Resolution 13/2026

**SUBJECT: SEEKING FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR THE GITXAALA AND EHATTESAHT DECISION AT
THE SUPREME COURT OF CANADA**

MOVED BY:

SECONDED BY:

DECISION: CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT (VOICE VOTE)

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations in British Columbia (BC) have inherent human rights, jurisdiction and stewardship over our lands and resources, and since the time of colonization, we hold constitutionally protected human rights, Aboriginal title and rights, and treaty rights;
- B. since the implosion of the California Gold Rush in the mid-19th century into northern Canada, mineral staking and exploration have remained a marker of the unlawful removal of First Nations peoples from their lands through reserve-making, reallocation policy, inequitable treaty-making, and discriminatory border policy that separated our nations. Remnants of these policies still exist in antiquated laws like the *Mineral Tenure Act* (MTA) that continue to violate our inherent rights and title and jurisdiction over our lands and resources;
- C. in 2019, BC formally adopted the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (Declaration Act) into BC law, with the intent to fully implement the globally recognized basic human rights standards in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN

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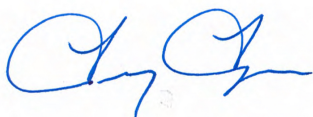
Declaration);

- D. Gitxaala Nation and Ehattesaht First Nation petitioned the British Columbia (BC) Courts to challenge provisions of the MTA and the operation of the automated online registry that permits free miners to register claims to mineral rights on Crown land with no consultation for affected First Nations. Gitxaala and Ehattesaht pursued the challenge on the ground that this online permitting system is inconsistent with the Crown's duty to consult under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, the honour of the Crown, the Declaration Act, and the rights recognized in the UN Declaration and sought declarations with respect to those inconsistencies;
- E. in December 2025, the BC Court of Appeal majority decision in *Gitxaala v British Columbia (Chief Gold Commissioner)*, 2025 BCCA 430 (Gitxaala decision), declared that the Chief Gold Commissioner's "conduct in establishing an online system allowing for automatic registration of mineral claims without requiring prior consultation and cooperation of affected Indigenous peoples is inconsistent with article 32(2) of [the UN Declaration]";
- F. as a result of the Gitxaala decision, the Province of BC has responded by publicly committing to amending the Declaration Act and the *Interpretation Act*, and has since filed an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada; and
- G. at the "Our Gathering" event, hosted by Indigenous Services Canada and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs in February 2026 in Vancouver, the Parliamentary Secretary to the federal Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, affirmed that Canada will not be amending Canada's *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* or the federal *Interpretation Act*.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly calls on the federal government, including the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, and the Minister for Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, to intervene, as a matter of good faith and in exercise of its fiduciary obligations, to the Supreme Court of Canada, should BC's appeal be successful, in support of the Gitxaala Nation and Ehattesaht First Nation and all First Nations in BC.

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BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
March 4-5, 2026
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Resolution 14/2026

**SUBJECT: CALL FOR FIRST RIGHT OF REFUSAL AND WATER RIGHTS TRANSFER
CONSULTATION MECHANISMS IN XAXLI'P TERRITORY**

MOVED BY:

SECONDED BY:

DECISION: CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT (VOICE VOTE)

WHEREAS:

- A. Xaxli'p is a member of the St'at'imc Nation and holds inherent rights, title, and jurisdiction over its traditional lands, waters, and resources;
- B. lands and properties within Xaxli'p Territory are being listed and sold without a formal mechanism to ensure the Nation is notified or provided the first opportunity to purchase or review such "Fee Simple" properties;
- C. The Declaration of the Lillooet Tribe was signed by St'at'imc leaders in 1911 reaffirms St'at'imc peoples title, rights, and sovereignty who have never surrendered or sold their title and rights to the Crown;
- D. property transactions within the Territory may include water licenses, diversion rights, or access to aquifers and critical waterways that directly impact Xaxli'p's inherent rights and responsibilities to protect and steward its source waters;

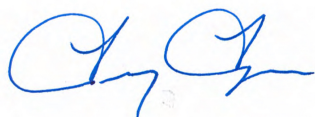
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- E. the protection of lands and waters is integral to St'at'imc laws, culture, food systems, environmental stewardship, and the health and well-being of future generations;
- F. the impacts of the climate crisis have placed extreme strain on source waters in Xaxli'p Territory, threatening rightsholders ability to sustainably steward Xaxli'p lands and waters;
- G. 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 Province of B.C., passed legislation committing to implement, affirms:
Article 3: Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination;
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(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired;
(2): Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired;
(3): States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.
Article 32: Indigenous peoples have the right to determine priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands, territories, and resources;
- H. meaningful consultation, consent and first right of refusal must extend to real property transfers and any associated water rights or water access that may affect Xaxli'p lands and waters;
- I. the Xaxli'p Ecosystem-Based Plan, developed in 2001, is a landscape-level management strategy for the Xaxli'p Survival Territory that prioritizes ecosystem health, cultural preservation, and protection and restoration of biological diversity within Xaxli'p Territory;
- J. under Section 22 of the *Water Sustainability Act* (WSA), the First in Time First in Right allocation system prioritizes water usage rights based on the license issue date. This system affords licensees greater water access and usage rights over First Nations rightsholders; and
- K. BCAFN Resolution 14/2021 entitled *Call for a Moratorium on all Pending and Future Water Bottle Licenses in BC* calls for the Province of BC to recognize First Nations as the first water users in BC and affirm Aboriginal and Treaty rights to water as priority rights within the First in Time, First in Right system under the WSA.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

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1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly calls on the Province of British Columbia (BC) to reform its First In Time First In Right water allocation system in full partnership with rights and titleholders and in a manner consistent with *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act);
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly calls on the Province of BC to recognize and uphold First Nations' inherent right to water, including the right to self-determination with respect to water allocation, use, and diversion on First Nations' territories;
3. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly calls on the Province of BC to implement a mandatory Water Transfer Consultation Trigger, requiring formal consultation and consent requirement with Xaxli'p prior to the approval, amendment, or transfer of any water licenses, diversion rights, or source water access associated with properties within Xaxil'p Territory;
4. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly calls upon the Province of BC to undertake legislative and policy reform to implement a First Right of Refusal mechanism, ensuring that Xaxli'p is provided formal notice and the first opportunity to review and potentially acquire Fee Simple Lands listed for sale within its Territory;
5. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly calls upon the Province of BC to co-develop mechanisms in a manner consistent with the UN Declaration and the Declaration Act grounded in mutual respect, recognition of St'at'imc jurisdiction, laws, Xaxli'p Ecosystem-Based Plan and the principle of free, prior, and informed consent; and
6. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the Regional Chief to advocate that the Province of BC, including the Ministry of Finance and all other relevant ministries responsible for land and water governance, must prioritize advancing necessary policy and legislative changes required to uphold the mandates set forth in this resolution.

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Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief