

## For Immediate Release

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### Unilateral inaction by BC Government undermines treaty negotiations

VANCOUVER– Thursday March 26, 2015. “It is troubling to hear such a fundamental disconnect on critically important negotiations that affect the very future of this Province. These are negotiations – legal and constitutional negotiations,” said Chief Commissioner Sophie Pierre in reaction to statements yesterday from the Premier. The process and the Treaty Commission support the parties: First Nations, Canada and British Columbia. “The negotiations are fundamentally their responsibility. The parties need to look at themselves and take responsibility for the success of the negotiations,” said Sophie Pierre.

“Let’s not trivialize the issue. The facts are simple – we need the Premier and Prime Minister’s commitment to treaty negotiations. I have been asking for a commitment right from the get go, but we seem to be going backwards to a dark time when BC questioned the need to engage in treaty negotiations at all,” said Sophie Pierre.

Numerous reviews and processes to examine how we can better support treaty negotiations have been in place since at least 2009 and BC has been participating in these. “These processes are still in place and are the best opportunity for rethinking how we might better engage with each other. You don’t make positive change by unilaterally blocking the Chief Commissioner appointment.” “This does not create the right atmosphere for reconciliation. It is not respectful of the other parties. It is not respectful of the constitutional imperative that is the foundation of the treaty negotiations process,” emphasized Sophie Pierre.

We should not be minimizing the importance of treaty negotiations and the investment made by all three parties for the last 22 years. To set the record straight: there are approximately 200 *Indian Act* Bands in British Columbia. There are 65 First Nations, representing 104 *Indian Act* Bands, which are participating in or which have completed treaties through the BC treaty negotiations process.

“A significant investment has been made by all the parties to the negotiations process. We can’t afford to throw that away with a gold rush mentality that pushes our legal and constitutional obligations aside” said Sophie Pierre.

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**About the BC Treaty Commission** The Treaty Commission is the independent body responsible for overseeing treaty negotiations among the governments of Canada, BC and First Nations in BC. It has three roles: facilitation, funding, and public information and education. Visit [www.bctreaty.ca](http://www.bctreaty.ca) to learn more about the Treaty Commission.