

June 17, 2021

**BC Treaty Commission celebrates the passing of Bill C-15, federal legislation to implement the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.**

Xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) VANCOUVER – Yesterday Bill C-15, *An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, was passed in the Senate, signifying an important step forward for the Government of Canada’s implementation of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration). The Treaty Commission applauds all the efforts of Indigenous leaders, Minister Lametti, Minister Bennett, Members of Parliament, and Senators for upholding Indigenous rights and establishing a national framework to achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration.

Bill C-15 affirms and upholds the rights of Indigenous peoples as recognized by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* and the UN Declaration. It affirms that “the Government of Canada must, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples, take all measures necessary to ensure that the laws of Canada are consistent with the Declaration” and develop a national action plan. The Bill further emphasizes that “all relations with Indigenous peoples must be based on the recognition and implementation of the inherent right to self-determination, including the right of self-government” in its preamble.

In BC, the treaty negotiations framework recognizes Indigenous rights and supports the implementation of the UN Declaration through negotiations of treaties and agreements. Treaty tables are already integrating the UN Declaration into negotiations, further supported through the *Recognition and Reconciliation of Rights Policy for Treaty Negotiations in British Columbia*. In November 2019, the BC provincial government passed the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*. British Columbia became the first province or territory in Canada to enact legislation, which has strongly benefited treaty negotiations and implementation.

“The Treaty Commission acknowledges the tremendous work of both the federal and BC provincial governments. After Bill C-15 receives Royal Assent, both will have legislation upholding the rights enshrined in the UN Declaration and action plans to advance meaningful reconciliation in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples,” says Chief Commissioner Celeste Haldane. “We recognize both governments for honouring the Calls to Action 43 and 44 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and continue to encourage all Canadians and British Columbians to take up the Calls to Action.”

**Quick Facts and Links:**

- June is National Indigenous History Month. The Treaty Commission is supporting an education campaign on the TRC’s Calls to Action through its [social media](#) platforms.
- The Principals expanded the Treaty Commission’s mandate in January 2018: “Through its role in facilitating treaty negotiations, BCTC will support the

implementation of the [UN Declaration](#), the [TRC's 94 Calls to Action](#), the [federal Principles](#), and the recognition of First Nations right and title.”

- In September 2019, the Principals endorsed the [Recognition and Reconciliation of Rights Policy for Treaty Negotiations in British Columbia](#). This new treaty negotiations policy was codeveloped with Indigenous leaders and is the first tripartite public policy recognizing and protecting Indigenous rights in BC.
- Indigenous leaders and organizations statement on the passage <https://bit.ly/3iQfZAO>
- Joint Statement by Minister Lametti and Minister Bennett <http://bit.ly/BillC152021>

- 30 -

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Sashia Leung / Associate Director / 604-482-9235 / [sleung@bctreaty.ca](mailto:sleung@bctreaty.ca)  
Mark Smith / Director of Process / [msmith@bctreaty.ca](mailto:msmith@bctreaty.ca)

#### **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.