

Kitselas First Nation, Canada, and British Columbia initial draft Treaty and advance new path to reconciliation and self-government

X^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sk^wxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) VANCOUVER – the BC Treaty Commission congratulates Kitselas First Nation, the Government of Canada, and the Government of British Columbia on the initialling of the Kitselas Treaty: A Living Agreement.

Today the Treaty Commission witnessed the initialling of the Treaty at Kitselas Canyon, which is in the heart of its traditional territory, located near Terrace. The Treaty was initialed by the Chief Negotiators of each Party, including Kitselas Chief Councillor Glenn Bennett. The Honourable Gary Anandasangaree, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, and the Honourable Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, also initialed the Treaty as witnesses. The Kitselas community was joined by hereditary chiefs and leadership from neighbouring First Nations, including Nisga’a Nation President Eva Clayton, local MP Taylor Bachrach and MLA Ellis Ross, MP Taleeb Noormohamed, and other business and local leaders.

This milestone reinforces the effectiveness of the BC negotiations framework in facilitating transformative change through treaties, agreements, and other constructive arrangements.

The Kitselas Treaty is the first to be initialed after the creation of the *Recognition and Reconciliation of Rights Policy for Treaty Negotiations in British Columbia* and other major changes, such as the provincial *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and the federal *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

There are eight modern treaties currently being implemented in British Columbia. Modern Treaties are living agreements – not full and final. All Modern Treaty Nations in BC have been able to include new benefits and innovations from new policies and legislation, such as recent changes to the policy previously requiring the phasing out of section 87 of the *Indian Act* tax exemptions.

The Kitselas Treaty will also be a living treaty and benefit from other future innovations in reconciliation. Kitselas First Nation will vote on its Treaty in April 2025. If a majority of Kitselas members vote in favour of the Treaty, it will then be sent to the provincial and federal legislatures for ratification. Once ratified by the two governments, there will be a transition period after which the Treaty will go into effect and begin implementation.

“We congratulate the three Parties on achieving this significant milestone, which represents the culmination of shared dedication, respect, and understanding for Kitselas self-governance and a prosperous future for all Canadians” says Chief Commissioner Celeste Haldane. “This Treaty will evolve over time just as the Nation-to-Nation, government-to-government-to-government relationship amongst the Parties will evolve and strengthen into the future.”

Quick Facts:

- For more information, please see the [Tripartite News Release](#) on the initialling of their Treaty and next steps.
- Kitselas First Nation entered the BC treaty negotiations process in 1993 as a member of the Tsimshian Tribal Council (now Tsimshian First Nations) and has approximately 750 members.

- In 2015, Kitselas First Nation, the Government of Canada and the Government of British Columbia signed the [Kitselas Agreement-in-Principle](#), setting out the basis for completing treaty negotiations.
- There are eight self-governing Modern Treaty Nations in BC: Nisga'a Nation, Tsawwassen First Nation, Huu-ay-aht First Nations, Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' First Nations, Toquaht Nation, Uchucklesaht Tribe, Yuułuꞵiꞵath (Ucluelet) First Nation, and Tla'amin Nation.

-30-

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Mark Smith | Director of Process and General Counsel | msmith@bctreaty.ca
Sashia Leung | Director of International Relations and Communications | sleung@bctreaty.ca

ABOUT THE BC TREATY COMMISSION

The Treaty Commission is the independent body responsible for overseeing treaty and tripartite reconciliation negotiations among the governments of Canada, British Columbia and First Nations in BC. It has three main roles: facilitation, funding, and public information and education.