

MINISTRY OF ABORIGINAL RELATIONS  
AND RECONCILIATION  
BRIEFING NOTE

File: 280-20

Date: August 6, 2013  
Ref. No. 32295

- I Prepared for the **INFORMATION** of Minister John Rustad
- II **ISSUE:** Minister Rustad meeting with Saik'uz First Nation
- III **BACKGROUND:**

Saik'uz First Nation (pron: sigh-cuz) is located south of Vanderhoof and has 817 band members. The main community resides on Stoney Creek Indian Reserve #1, approximately 95 km west of Prince George. The Chief of Saik'uz is Stanley Thomas and Councillors are Benjie Alexis, Albert George, Cora McIntosh and Denise Raymond.



Saik'uz is affiliated with the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council (CSTC) and is currently not active in the Treaty process.

**Status of agreements and negotiations:**

There are currently no existing agreements with Saik'uz, but future opportunities include a Forest Consultation and Revenue Sharing Agreement (FCRSA).

There is an opportunity for a Strategic Engagement Agreement (SEA) in partnership with CSTC and its member bands; CSTC is promoting the development of a SEA, on behalf of Saik'uz. However, MARR has not engaged directly with Saik'uz and it is still unclear as to the level of support from the First Nation on this proposal.

IV **DISCUSSION:**

Minister Rustad can expect to meet with the Chief and Council. Saik'uz First Nation may also invite community members and Elders to attend the meeting.

It is anticipated that the following items will be raised during the meeting:

Pipelines: There are two significant initiatives that may result in new pipelines west from Prince George to the north coast area and could cross Saik'uz territory: Enbridge and liquefied natural gas (LNG). Saikuz is publicly opposed to the Enbridge pipeline and are a member of the Yinka Dene Alliance, formed to oppose the heavy oil pipeline. In regard to LNG, Saikuz is not opposed, but publicly acknowledge the need for the Province and Industry to engage with their communities and accommodate the First Nations through appropriate agreements. Further information is provided in LNG Briefing Note, 32287

Revenue sharing: Saik'uz was offered an FCRSA in 2011. The band disagreed with the amount of revenue sharing offered (3%) and did not engage in further discussions on the agreement. In 2009/2010 there had also been a miscommunication between the Province and Saik'uz regarding annual rent payments on their forest tenure, which added tension to the relationship. Saik'uz has since sent the Province three separate invoices for 50% of the total revenue generated on their territory, which the Province has declined payment on.

Economic and Community Development Agreements (ECDA) Two proposed mines, Chu mine and Blackwater mine, could be discussed with Saik'uz in the future as opportunities for revenue sharing. At this time there are no mandates in place for these discussions and it is unclear if the projects will advance to producing mines.

## V KEY MESSAGES:

- The Province would like to see beneficial arrangements with Saik'uz that would facilitate prosperity for their communities from the LNG sector.
- The Province encourages Saikuz to continue working with MARR regional staff and MARR negotiators to develop strategies to address specific interests and concerns.
- MARR Omineca staff are available to discuss a potential FCRSA with Saik'uz. The FCRSA would provide forestry revenue opportunities for Saik'uz and also outlines a process for consultation on forestry activities within Saik'uz traditional territory.

If pressed on a commitment to develop a SEA:

- The Province encourages Saik'uz to work with CSTC to engage MARR staff on discussions for a phased approach to a SEA.
- Consultation process to support Saik'uz engagement on LNG pipeline related authorizations is a priority interest for the Province and could provide a stepping stone to a comprehensive SEA arrangement.