

MINISTRY OF ABORIGINAL RELATIONS
AND RECONCILIATION
BRIEFING NOTE

File: 280-20

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- I Prepared for the **INFORMATION** of Minister John Rustad
- II **ISSUE:** Minister Rustad meeting with Tl'azt'en First Nation.
- III **BACKGROUND:**



Tl'azt'en Nation (pron: claz-den) has 1,399 band members of which 600 are reported to live off reserve. Most band members live on the Tache, Nancut and Pinchie (Binche) Reserves, approximately 50 km northwest of Fort St. James, on the north shore of Stuart Lake (49 reserves on 2,785.7 hectares). The Middle River settlements on Trembleur Lake and Grand Rapids also belong to Tl'azt'en Nation (Tl'azt'en). Chief of Tl'azt'en is Ralph Pierre and Councillors are Joshua Hallman, Conrad Joseph, Charlene Tom, Georgina Alexis, Gloria Duncan, Peter Joseph and Rachel Robert. Next elections are scheduled for May 2014 and August 2016.

Tl'azt'en is affiliated with the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council (CSTC) and is not active in the Treaty process.

Status of agreements and negotiations:

Tl'azt'en holds a Community Forest Agreement, operates a logging and forest management company (Tanizul Timber), and manages the John Prince Research Forest jointly with the University of Northern British Columbia. Tl'azt'en is currently in negotiations for 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 and CSTC is promoting the development of a SEA, on behalf of Tl'azt'en. However, MARR has not engaged directly with Tl'azt'en 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. Tl'azt'en 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: Enbridge and liquefied natural gas (LNG). Tl'azt'en are publically opposed to the Enbridge pipeline. No pipelines

supporting LNG facilities are currently proposed to cross Tl'azt'en Traditional Territory. It is not anticipated that a benefit sharing agreement on LNG pipelines will be negotiated with Tl'azt'en. For further information on LNG please see the LNG Briefing Note Reference #32287.

Internal Governance: Tl'azt'en is challenged with on-going internal governance issues, specifically between the Binche and Middle River Keyoh's and Tl'azt'en. The Binche Keyoh want to separate from the Tl'azt'en as the Binche First Nation and have posted signage on the reserve indicating their interest to assume control of lease arrangements for recreational cabins. The Middle River Keyoh posted signage at the start of their Keyoh stating the road is closed until further notice. The issue with the Middle River Keyoh is focused on resource development, in which the Middle River Keyoh wants a larger share of funding and a more active role in decisions within their territory.

MARR staff are aware of the potential for blockades and are monitoring the situation. In the event of escalation of activities MARR will work with the RCMP and other Ministries to ensure public safety. FLNRO and MARR have a further meeting with Tl'azt'en on August 7th to continue discussions with the Middle River and Tl'azt'en on the Keyoh actions.

FCRSA: MARR has put FCRSA negotiations with Tl'azt'en on hold due to the road closure signs posted at Middle River. MARR has clearly indicated a willingness to resume discussions once the signs are removed.

V KEY MESSAGES:

- Lease arrangements are private arrangements between Tl'azt'en and the individual lease holder. The Province has no role in these arrangements. Lease holders are encouraged to seek their own legal advice.
- Governance issues are internal to the band and its Keyoh's and are subject to the Indian Act (Federal jurisdiction).
- The current approach regarding LNG projects is to negotiate agreements only with those First Nations whose territories the pipelines will cross. Other opportunities for skill training and employment exist.
- MARR is willing to resume discussions on the FCRSA once the road closure signs are removed.

If pressed on a commitment to develop a SEA:

- The Province encourages Nadleh Whut'en to work with CSTC to engage MARR staff on discussions for a phased approach to a SEA.