



**Decision Note  
Advice to Minister**

**Date:** April 2, 2019

**Cliff #: 35995**

**Issue:** Proclaiming May 2019 as Asian Heritage Month in British Columbia

**Background / Facts:**

- A request has been received by the Vancouver Asian Heritage Month Society for British Columbia to proclaim May 2019 as Asian Heritage Month.
- In December 2001, Vivienne Poy, the first Canadian of Asian descent to be appointed to the Senate of Canada, introduced a motion to recognise the month of May as Asian Heritage Month.
- More than one million British Columbians identify their ethnic origin as Asian, representing a wide diaspora of languages, ethnicities and religious traditions.
- Over the last 20 years, the BC Government has proclaimed the month of May eleven times as Asian Heritage Month.

**Analysis:**

- The request to proclaim the month of May as Asian Heritage month meets established proclamation criteria for the multiculturalism file given it:
  - has significance or general application to B.C.;
  - observes milestones, recognizes achievements or directs attention to a worthy cause;
  - is not political by nature;
  - would not be considered offensive or frivolous by the public; and
  - aligns with the ministry mandate and BC Multiculturalism Act.
- Section 2 of the Multiculturalism Act states that two of the purposes of the Act are to:
  - "recognize that the diversity of British Columbians...is a fundamental characteristic of the society of British Columbia"; and
  - "encourage respect for the multicultural heritage of British Columbia."
- The requestor is currently organizing a launch event on behalf of the Vancouver Asian Heritage Society on April 27, 2019. Minister of State for Trade, the Honourable George Chow has indicated he will be attending and will read the proclamation at this event, if it is approved.
- In recent years, the Ministry has supported annual supports on average five heritage-focused proclamations, including: Asian Heritage Month, Latin American Week, Sikh Heritage Month, Italian Heritage Month, and Black History Month.

**Recommendation / Next Steps (if any):**

- Approve Asian Heritage Month (May 2019) proclamation.

Approved/Not Approved

Honourable Lisa Beare

April 5, 2019

Date

**Appendix A:** *Draft Proclamation*  
**Contact:** *Asha Bhat, Executive Lead, 778-698-1806*

**Appendix A: Draft Proclamation**

**Asian Heritage Month**

- WHEREAS diversity represents one of British Columbia's greatest strengths and we strive to ensure that all British Columbians have the opportunity to reach their full potential and participate in Canada's civic life, and
- WHEREAS over the last two centuries, immigrants have journeyed to Canada from all parts of Asia, bringing to our society a rich cultural heritage representing many languages, ethnicities and religious traditions, and
- WHEREAS the people of this diverse, vibrant community have contributed to every aspect of life in British Columbia from arts and science to sports, business and government, and
- WHEREAS Asian Heritage Month offers all Canadians an opportunity to learn more about the history of Asian Canadians and to celebrate their contributions to the growth of prosperity of Canada;

NOW KNOW YE THAT We do by these presents proclaim and declare that May 2019, shall be known as

**"Asian Heritage Month"**

in the Province of British Columbia.



**Decision Note  
Advice to Minister**

**Date:** April 23, 2019

**Cliff #:** 36081

**Re:** Proclaiming May 12, 2019 as Tzu Chi Day

**Background / Facts:**

- A request has been submitted by the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation, Canada ("Tzu Chi Canada") to proclaim May 12, 2019 as Tzu Chi Day.
- Founded by Master Cheng Yen, a Taiwanese Buddhist nun, the Tzu Chi Foundation is a worldwide humanitarian organization that, while secular, incorporates Buddhist teachings into its practices.
- Tzu Chi Canada was established in B.C. in 1992 as a charitable service organization.
  - Foundation volunteers work with food banks, the Salvation Army, seniors' residences, shelters, emergency social services programs, and on environmental initiatives.
  - Volunteer fundraising efforts contribute to hospital fundraisers, bursary programs and breakfast programs in schools.
- Tzu Chi Day will be celebrated on May 12, 2019 this year. The day coincides with celebrations for the Buddha's birthday in many East Asian countries and regions, including Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea.
- The BC Government has proclaimed Tzu Chi Day every year since 2007 except for 2010 and 2013.
- The intent of the day is to promote altruism and harmony among all people regardless of their cultural background or faith.
- Over 90,000 British Columbians identified as practicing Buddhism in the 2011 Statistics Canada National Household Survey, the most recent collection of faith-based data.

**Analysis:**

- This request meets established proclamation criteria for the multiculturalism file given it:
  - has significance or general application to B.C.;
  - observes milestones, recognizes achievements or directs attention to a worthy cause;
  - is not political by nature;
  - would not be considered offensive or frivolous by the public; and
  - aligns with both the Ministry's mandate and BC Multiculturalism Act.
- Section 2 of the Multiculturalism Act states that two of the purposes of the Act are: "to recognize that the diversity of British Columbians... is a fundamental characteristic of the society of British Columbia" and "encourage respect for the multicultural heritage of British Columbia."
- In recent years, the Ministry has annually supported on average five faith-focused proclamations, including: Sikh Heritage Month, Tzu Chi Day, St. Andrew's Day, St. George Day and World Interfaith Harmony Day.
- The Ministry has consulted the Intergovernmental Relations Office on the request. They do not have any concerns.

**Recommendation / Next Steps (if any):**

Approve Tzu Chi Day proclamation (May 12, 2019).

Approved/Not Approved



**Honourable Lisa Beare**

**April 29, 2019**

**Date**

**Appendix A:**     *Draft Proclamation*  
**Contact:**        *Asha Bhat, Executive Lead, 778-698-1806*

## **Appendix A: Draft Proclamation**

### **Tzu Chi Day**

- WHEREAS Tzu Chi Foundation Canada, founded in 1992, and adhering to the teaching of Master Cheng Yen, founder of Tzu Chi Foundation in Taiwan, has dedicated itself to spreading love and compassion in Canada and British Columbia, particularly in Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley and Indigenous communities, and
- WHEREAS Tzu Chi Foundation Canada's members have been serving the communities of British Columbia continuously for up to 27 years by visiting seniors' residences and care homes; providing free traditional Chinese medicine clinics to Indigenous people and community health centres; engaging in community services, including food banks and street cleaning; providing bursaries and breakfasts for students and relief to the homeless, underprivileged and victims of disasters; engaging in eco-conservation; donating raised funds to major hospitals; hosting citizenship swearing-in ceremonies; and engaging fellow British Columbians to practice Tzu Chi principles of "gratitude, respect and love," and
- WHEREAS Tzu Chi Foundation Canada's members have exemplified their devotion, generosity and volunteerism, and their efforts have reflected the compassionate nature of Buddhism and the kindness of the Tzu Chi people, and
- WHEREAS Tzu Chi Foundation Canada, in celebration of its 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary, cordially invites the citizens of British Columbia to celebrate, participate in and share the genuine spirit of love and compassion of Tzu Chi;

NOW KNOW YE THAT We do by these presents proclaim and declare that May 12, 2019, shall be known as

**"Tzu Chi Day"**

in the Province of British Columbia.