



Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

2025
ESTIMATES BINDER

Table of Contents

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
2025 Estimates

- 1. Minister's Speaking Notes**
- 2. Budget 2025 Key Messages and Q&A**
 - Efficiency Review Expenditure Management Key Messages
- 3. CSNR Budget Materials**
 - Budget Highlights
 - Service Plan
 - Estimates Blue Book and Supplement
- 4. Mandate Letter**
- 5. Reconciliation Accomplishments**
- 6. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act**
 - Declaration Act Overview
 - Section 3 - Declaration Act Secretariat
 - Alignment of Laws
 - Consultation and Cooperation / Interim Approach
 - Section 4 - Action Plan Review
 - Section 5 - Declaration Act Annual Report Indicator Framework
 - Section 6 and 7 – Agreements
 - Section 7 - Consent vs Veto
- 7. Declaration Act Engagement Fund**
- 8. Distinctions Based Approach**
- 9. Engagement - First Nations**
- 10. Engagement - Partner and Interest Holder**
- 11. Federal Issues**
 - Canada's Role in the Work of Reconciliation
 - Current Federal Political Climate Impacts
 - Federal-Provincial Cost Sharing for Treaty and Long-Term Reconciliation Agreements
- 12. First Peoples' Cultural Council**
 - Federal Funding
- 13. Forest Consultation and Revenue Sharing Agreement Program**

Table of Contents

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
2025 Estimates

- 14.**Former Residential School and Hospital Sites Response
- 15.**Gaming Revenue Sharing
- 16.**Haida Litigation
- 17.**Indicators of Economic Reconciliation
- 18.**Kwikwetlem First Nation Litigation and Reconciliation Agreement
- 19.**Land Return - Crown Land Reconciliation
- 20.**Métis Nation BC and the Province's Relationship
- 21.**Modern Treaty Nations Lands and Resources Funding
- 22.**Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil Waututh Attainable Housing Initiative
- 23.**Non-Treaty Agreements in BC – Status
- 24.**Natural Resource Projects
- 25.**New Fiscal Framework
- 26.**Overlap Challenges
- 27.**shíshálh Foundation Agreement 2
- 28.**Tariff Response
- 29.**Transboundary Nations / US Tribes
- 30.**Treaties in BC – Status
- 31.**Treaty 8 Funding and Consensus Document
 - WLRs: Blueberry River First Nations Implementation Agreement
- 32.**Treaty 8 – Treaty Land Entitlement Claims
- 33.**Tsilhqot'in National Government
- 34.**Union of BC Municipalities Memorandum of Understanding
- 35.**Urban Indigenous Peoples
- 36.**Wet'suwet'en Reconciliation



**Speaking Notes
for**

Hon. Christine Boyle

Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

**Estimates 2025
Introductory notes**

BC Legislature

Wednesday, April 30, 2025

INTRODUCTION

- Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
- Good afternoon.
- I am grateful to be here on the territory of the Lekwungen [*Luh-KWUNG-in*] peoples – the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.
- The ləkʷəŋən [*Luh-KWUNG-in*] People have lived, hunted, gathered food and medicine on these lands since time immemorial.

[PAUSE]

- ...and this land is inseparable from the lives, laws, languages, art, and culture of those who have lived here since time immemorial.

[PAUSE]

- It is my pleasure and honour to speak today on the estimates for the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and the Declaration Act Secretariat as part of Budget 2025...
- Joining me for Estimates from the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation are:
- Deputy Minister Tom McCarthy.
- Ranbir Parmar, Assistant Deputy Minister and Executive Financial Officer.
- Carolyn Kamper, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Negotiations and Regional Operations Division...

- This division is responsible for negotiating and implementing major reconciliation agreements with First Nations in B.C.
- Agreements including...
 - Treaty;
 - incremental treaty agreements;
 - comprehensive reconciliation agreements;
 - consultation and revenue sharing agreements; and others.
- These agreements are negotiated in collaboration with First Nations, provincial agencies, and the federal government...
- ...and focus both on natural resource matters and social sector areas.

[PAUSE]

- Ann Marie Sam, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Reconciliation, Transformation and Strategies Division, has also joined us.
- This part of the Ministry provides a leadership role for the development and implementation of strategic cross-government reconciliation initiatives, such as...
 - The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act implementation – including the Declaration Act Action Plan and Declaration Act Annual Report.
 - The Commitment Document with the First Nations Leadership Council; and
 - The Draft 10 Principles.

- The division consists of three work units
 - Indigenous economic development;
 - Intergovernmental relations and stakeholder engagement; and the
 - Reconciliation strategies branch.

[PAUSE]

- Julia Iwama, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships Division, is also here today.
- This division of the Ministry is responsible for overseeing key reconciliation activities, such as...
- Improving social and economic outcomes for Indigenous peoples – whether in their communities or in urban and off-reserve areas;

- Implementing treaties by ensuring government obligations are met, while maintaining positive government-to-government relationships;
- Providing innovative fiscal solutions and services; and
- Ensuring Indigenous interests and needs are supported during provincial emergencies.
- This division also leads the Province's approach to supporting residential school survivors and lead communities, in partnership with the federal government.

[PAUSE]

- Richard Purnell, Executive Lead for the New Fiscal Framework, has also joined us.

- The aim of the new fiscal framework is to co-develop a new approach to the fiscal relationship between the Crown and First Nations in B.C...
- ...to help support Indigenous governments access sources of revenue to deliver services and build healthy, secure, and prosperous communities – building a better province for everyone.

[PAUSE]

- Joining me from the Declaration Act Secretariat is...
- Si Sityaawks [*See-Sit-Yowks*] Jessica Wood, Deputy Minister...
- ...and ɕaʔaa [*Sah-ahh*] Priscilla Sabbas-Watts, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Legislative Transformation and Engagement.

- Established in 2022, the Declaration Act Secretariat is a central agency within government that guides and assists ministries in meeting the alignment of laws obligations...
- Collaborates within government on changes to government's legislative and policy process...
- And helps establish government's legislative priorities related to the important work of aligning provincial laws with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples.

[PAUSE]

- Additionally, I'd like to introduce Tracey Herbert, CEO, First Peoples' Cultural Council.

- FPCC is a First Nations-led Crown Corporation established in 1990 by the Province, at the request of First Nations leaders.
- The Council supports First Nations' people in their efforts to revitalize languages, arts, cultures and heritage.

[PAUSE]

Truth and Reconciliation

- I am honoured and humbled to speak on the tremendous work Indigenous Peoples and this government are doing together to implement the Declaration Act.
- I'd like to start by reminding every member of this house of how we got to this point.

- Approved in 2006, the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement came after decades of advocacy from Indigenous survivors and communities.
- At the time, the settlement agreement was the largest class action lawsuit in Canadian history.
- The Supreme Court of Canada affirmed the evidence as overwhelming.
- The Court confirmed the truth of the common experiences at residential schools and the violent impacts of specific and sweeping abuses.
- And they provided direction to all of us as Canadian citizens to reconcile with this truth.

- A small part of the settlement agreement was the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- This is the only Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the world that has ever been court mandated.
- Ten years ago, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released the 94 Calls to Action.
- The 94 Calls to Action lay out the path to be followed if Canadians are to achieve true and meaningful reconciliation.
- Six years of hearings, and testimony from 6,000 residential school survivors and their loved ones.

- The survivors spoke truth to the legacy of the residential school system...
- ...and its intergenerational and ongoing impact on Indigenous Peoples.
- 150,000 children stolen from their parents.
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission called on **ALL** governments and all Canadians to adopt and implement the UN Declaration as our guide.
- Not just into customary international law, but into domestic common law here in B.C. and Canada.
- If reconciliation starts with truth and respect, then our collective journey begins here.

[PAUSE]

- B.C. was the first to adopt the UN Declaration into law.
- We owe this accomplishment to generations of Indigenous leaders and others who advocated for a better future.
- I am proud to say since those days of denial and court battles, B.C. has deeply and fundamentally changed our relationship with Indigenous Peoples.
- I am proud of the work of the Secretariat, the Ministry and the whole of government to advance reconciliation...
- And specifically, to implement the UN Declaration in B.C. through the Declaration Act.

- By working together with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, through consultation and co-operation, we are finding solutions and building a stronger B.C. for everyone.

[PAUSE]

Residential school denialism

- I will say though, even through all this work, there is a rise in residential school denialism in this province.
- Our government is taking this seriously, recognizing the harm that it causes former students, survivors and their families...
- ...as well as the contractors and consultants working for the communities investigating.

- The attempts by some to discredit the findings at former residential schools is deeply disturbing.
- It perpetuates a troubling and persistent pattern of thought that seeks to deny the very real experiences of former students and their families.
- The facts as they relate to residential schools have been heavily studied and litigated.
- To put this dark history behind us, we must stop denying the truth.

[PAUSE]

- Children died and were buried as a result of egregious institutions and individuals at residential schools.
- We must have compassion and humility.

- Most of all, as leaders in our province and in our country, we share in the accountability not to disseminate mis-information and race based denialism in this house.

[PAUSE]

- The Province, with the support of Charlene Belleau in her role as First Nation Liaison, continues to support all caretaker First Nations who wish to investigate the sites of former Indian Residential Schools and Indian Hospitals across the province.
- The Province has provided funding to support First Nation-led investigations at all 18 Indian Residential School sites and three Indian Hospitals across B.C.
- This is a direct response to TRC's Calls to Action #72 through 76.

[PAUSE]

- The Province has made education about the history and legacy of the residential school system a key priority.
- Orange Shirt Day on September 30, a day also now marked as National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, is an important day in B.C. and across Canada...
- ...it is a day is to honour the resilience, dignity and strength of survivors and intergenerational survivors who suffered in the residential school system...
- ...and remember the children that never came home.

- Orange Shirt Day would not exist without the strength and courage of the campaign’s founder, Phyllis Webstad.

[PAUSE]

- Her story of residential school survival, as well as those shared by Orange Shirt Day Victoria co-founder Eddy Charlie, the late Rick Gilbert, former Chief of Williams Lake First Nation, and so many others, sparked a national conversation on the true history of this country.
- September 30, 2025 marks the twelfth anniversary of Orange Shirt Day.
- It is an important opportunity to also encourage deeper reflection, learning and public dialogue on the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

- And directly responds to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #80...
- ...and provides an important opportunity to engage and educate more British Columbians about the history of colonialism, the legacy of residential schools, and its continued impact on Indigenous communities today.
- The Province remains committed to continuing education in this area so that everyone in British Columbia learns about and understands the legacy of residential schools, which remains a vital component in the reconciliation process.

[PAUSE]

Budget 2025

- The Province remains deeply committed to advancing reconciliation in B.C. – guided by the Declaration Act and with meaningful consultation and co-operation with Indigenous Peoples.
- Budget 2025 will allow us to continue to do this important work, and to effectively deliver the Ministry's and Secretariat's mandates.
- We are working with First Nations and Indigenous organizations across B.C. to support long-overdue improvements to infrastructure, housing, culture, education, and more...
- We are also working with First Nations to build the Province's economy, advance major projects, and support our tariff response.

- At this moment in time, in this economic and political climate, it is so clear that we are stronger if we are together.
- Now, more than ever, we need to stand strong together against division.

[PAUSE]

- Budget 2025/26 is about standing strong for B.C. and making sure public services are there when we need them – including supports for Indigenous Peoples.
- We are protecting the programs and services Indigenous Peoples are using to build resilient, self-determining, and prosperous communities...
- ...as well as continuing the important work of reconciliation in the face of US tariffs.

[PAUSE]

- Like all provincial budgets, the numbers on their own do not convey the scope of the work underway...
- ...or the quality of the relationship with First Nations, Métis, or Indigenous Peoples as a whole.
- For the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Budget 2025/26 provides dedicated funding to advance reconciliation...
- ...and the ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples.
- It supports agreements like the Haida Land Title Agreement to formally recognizes Haida Aboriginal title throughout Haida Gwaii.

- It supports the next steps in the treaty process for K'ómoks, Kitselas and Kitsumkalum after they initialed their modern treaties last summer...
- ...with K'ómoks overwhelmingly voting in favour of ratifying their treaty in March...
- ...Kitselas voting yes on April 10...
- ...and Kitsumkalum's vote coming up in the fall...
- ...all of which are steps supporting the recognition of Indigenous justification and self-determination.

[PAUSE]

- Budget 2025/26 also
- Supports land transfers...
- Economic development...

- And continues government's work with Métis Nation BC.

[PAUSE]

DAS & alignment of laws

- Budget 2025/26 continues stable funding for the Declaration Act Secretariat to deliver its work.
- Funding for the Secretariat is expressed as a separate item in the Budget estimates.
- This is consistent with the Secretariat's unique reporting structure.
- While the Secretariat reports directly to me as Minister, it is independent and distinct from the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.

[PAUSE]

- Thanks in large part to the Secretariat, across government we are continuing to make steady progress on work to align laws.
- We are fundamentally shifting our approach to how we both develop and implement provincial laws, which is resulting in an increasing number of legislative reforms.
- Acts that...
 - support Indigenous Peoples in exercising their jurisdiction over child and family services;

- upheld First Nations jurisdiction over education...
- ...which includes enabling First Nations to certify and regulate teachers in their own schools;
- added a non-derogation clause to the Interpretation Act...
- ...which makes it clear that provincial laws uphold, and do not diminish, the rights of Indigenous Peoples as outlined under Section 35 of the Constitution Act; and
- added Indigenous identity as a protected ground under the B.C. Human Rights Code...
- ...which will help us all combat racism and protect Indigenous Peoples from discrimination.

[PAUSE]

- One year ago, we made changes to the Property Law Act and the Land Title Act through Bill 13 – The Land Title and Property Amendment Act, 2024...
- To provide administrative changes to the ways First Nations can acquire, hold and register fee simple land, leaseholds and other interests in B.C....
- ...reducing discriminatory and racist barriers.
- These administrative changes also provide a choice for First Nations to register the land they own in their own name in the Land Title Office...
- ...in the same way as companies and private individuals.

- These administrative changes are meaningful for First Nations and a step on the path towards reconciliation.
- We have also now eliminated the Property Transfer Tax on these transfers, so First Nations can move property under their direct ownership without worrying about that added cost.
- Exemptions apply to land beneficially owned by the First Nation prior to May 21, 2024.

[PAUSE]

Declaration Act

- Implementing the Declaration Act – including alignment of laws – is a cross-government priority.

- B.C. and First Nations have done a tremendous amount of work together since the NDP formed government almost eight years ago
 - putting Indigenous rights in common law by unanimously passing the Declaration Act, and
 - developing an action plan that is producing changes on the ground for Indigenous Peoples.
- The Province released the Declaration Act Action Plan on March 30, 2022...
- ...a five-year, cross-government action plan to implement the UN Declaration in B.C.

- The first of its kind, the Declaration Act Action Plan includes 89 tangible, achievable cross-government actions in the areas of
 - self-determination and self-government
 - rights and title
 - ending anti-Indigenous racism, and
 - enhancing social, cultural and economic well-being.

[PAUSE]

- Across government, steady progress has been made to implement the Declaration Act Action Plan.
- Details in the Declaration Act Annual Report shows that reconciliation is truly a cross-government priority...

- ...and reflects the tremendous efforts being made to put our collective words into action.
- All ministries have identified actions and aligned – or are aligning – their priorities and budgets to implement these actions.

[PAUSE]

Ministry investments

- The Province continues to deliver dedicated and dependable funding that allows us to continue to advance tangible reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in B.C. – both immediately and longer-term.
- Our budget is funded to match signed agreement costs and adjusts along with commitments.

- The combined budget for the Ministry and the Declaration Act Secretariat is \$186.958 million.
- This is an increase of over \$26 million – or 16.8% – from the previous year.

[PAUSE]

- Our budget includes dedicated and dependable funding that allows us to meet commitments...
- ...to continue to work in consultation and co-operation with Indigenous Peoples, and...
- ...effectively deliver our mandate.
- This includes:
 - New, stable funding for the First Peoples' Cultural Council of \$15 million a year.

- Eight million dollars annual increase for Fiscal Relationship Agreements with Modern Treaty Nations to participate in co-management of land and resources in their territory.
- And increases related to signed agreements.

[PAUSE]

- The budget does not fully reflect the scope of government's work and support of Indigenous partners.
- In 2022, we delivered one-time, historic multi-year investments...
- ...supporting First Nations governments through the Declaration Act Engagement Fund to engage on their top priorities...

- ...along with other Ministry's who provided multi year funding to growing First Nations participation in the clean energy economy, and...
- ...support food security.
- These investments are still being delivered and are making a real difference in the lives of Indigenous Peoples today.

[PAUSE]

Investing in languages

- Part of the Ministry's work toward reconciliation has to do with empowering Indigenous Peoples to revitalize their culture and their languages.
- There is incredible language diversity in British Columbia – there are 36 First Nations languages.

- Together, they make up more than half of all First Nations languages in Canada.
- We want to help build a province where First Nations languages and cultures are living and celebrated everywhere.
- I am pleased Budget 2025/26 continues to strengthen First Nations-led efforts to revitalize languages, cultures and arts heritage...
- Investments in the First Peoples' Cultural Council helps First Nations communities, organizations and individuals in their efforts to revitalize their languages and cultures...
- ...while also creating good jobs and economic benefits.

- Last year alone, the grants delivered by FPCC created more than 1,600 jobs and generated an estimated \$69 million in Gross Domestic Product in British Columbia.

[PAUSE]

Revenue sharing

- Sharing revenue with First Nations communities remains an important reconciliation tool.
- It supports implementation of the UN Declaration and the self-determined pursuit of economic, social, and community development.
- Budget 2025 forecasts that \$716 million over three years will be shared with First Nations through natural resource revenue sharing...

- ...as the benefits of economic activity are returned directly to the community.
- First Nations are also expected to receive \$300 million through gaming revenue over the fiscal plan...
- ...to support self-government and self-determination, strong health communities, and services that make life better for families.
- Recognizing First Nations as one of three orders of government in this country, with their own rights and responsibilities, is foundational to our approach.

- And sharing the revenues generated by economic opportunities helps support economic growth in First Nations communities and for all British Columbians.

[PAUSE]

Conclusion

- As you can see, funding decisions for Budget 2025/26 are underpinned by government's commitment to tangible reconciliation through the implementation of the UN Declaration...
- ...by prioritizing opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in the inclusive and sustainable province we are building together.
- We also continue our efforts to bringing partners, industry and the public along in this work.

- Community engagement promotes partnerships and collaboration between Indigenous Peoples, local governments, industry, partners and community members.
- We know reconciliation is good for everyone – it is a rising tide that lifts all boats.
- It creates certainty, opportunity and prosperity for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike.
- I look forward to questions from the members of this House.
- Thank you.

-END-

Budget 2025 – Key Questions and Answers
Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation/
Declaration Act Secretariat
Government Communications and Public Engagement
Last updated: April 25, 2025

Key Messages

- **Budget 2025/26 protects the programs and services Indigenous Peoples are using to build resilient, self-determining, and prosperous communities as well as continuing the important work of reconciliation in the face of US tariffs.**
- **Budget 2025/26 provides stable funding of \$15 million per year to advance the work of the First Peoples' Cultural Council.**
- **This will help the organization support First Nations in their efforts to revitalize their languages and cultures, while also creating good jobs and economic benefits.**
- **Budget 2025/26 also delivers on our commitment to provide stable, ongoing funding to support Modern Treaty Nations to participate in resource management within their territories.**
- **Like all provincial budgets, the numbers on their own do not convey the scope of the work underway or the quality of the relationship with First Nations, Métis, or Indigenous Peoples as a whole.**
- **I can assure you it will enable the Ministry to meet its commitments, continue to work in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, and to effectively deliver on my mandate.**

Questions & Answers

1. What is in the Ministry's budget for 2025/26?

- The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation's budget is funded to match signed agreement costs and adjusts along with our commitments.
- MIRR's 2025/26 budget is \$186.958 million. This is a \$26.862-million increase (16.8%) from the previous year.
- It includes dedicated and dependable funding allows us to meet our commitments, continue to work in consultation and co-operation with Indigenous Peoples, and to effectively deliver our mandate.
- This includes:
 - New, stable funding for the First Peoples' Cultural Council of \$15 million a year.
 - Eight million dollars annual increase for Fiscal Relationship Agreements with Modern Treaty Nations to participate in co-management of land and resources in their territory.
 - And additional payments related to Liquefied Natural Gas revenue sharing.

2. Does Budget 2025 provide funding for First People's Cultural Council?

- First Nations language revitalization is so important. First Nations languages are a fundamental and valued element of our culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them.
- Budget 2025 nearly doubles the Province's previous investments in language and culture programming, with stable funding of \$15 million per year for the next three years to advance the work of the First Peoples' Cultural Council.
- \$12 million per year will be dedicated to addressing the growing demand for language instruction, and provide critical jobs for expert speakers, particularly elders and First Nations women.
- Investments in the First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) helps First Nations communities, organizations and individuals in their efforts to revitalize their languages and cultures, while also creating good jobs and economic benefits.
- Last year alone, the grants delivered by FPCC created more than 1,600 jobs and generated an estimated \$69 million in Gross Domestic Product in British Columbia.
- I'd like to recognize the many First Nations people who have made it their life's work to protect their arts, language and cultural heritage.
- These are the original languages and cultures that come from this land and were interrupted by colonization and the residential school system.
- Through these meaningful investments, First Nations and the Province are putting reconciliation into practice, addressing the legacy of the residential school system, and making progress on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action.
- In addition to the \$15 million, there is also a \$420,000 increase to support FPCC core operations.
- In Budget 2023/24, a \$6-million-dollar annual operational boost was announced to support the work of First Nations' languages, cultures, arts and heritage revitalization, increasing to \$6.720 million in 2025/26 and ongoing.
- This additional \$420,000 in core operational funding will allow the First Peoples' Cultural Council to maintain current staffing levels and deliver on current and future commitments.

3. How can you justify \$45 million in new spending on First Nations languages in this economic time?

- First Nations language revitalization is so important. First Nations languages are a fundamental and valued element of our culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them.
- Between 2018 and 2024, B.C. has committed \$136 million to support First Nations arts, cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and languages.
- The last funding commitment occurred in 2022 when the First Peoples' Cultural Council and First Peoples' Cultural Foundation received a \$34.75 million investment.
- Funding committed to in Budget 2025/26 continues the work underway at comparable funding levels while assisting the First Peoples Cultural Council and First Nations communities by committing to predictable, stable funding each year as opposed to intermittent grant funding.

4. Who speaks these languages?

- There are more language learners than ever. According to the most recent data, there are more than 17,000 First Nations language learners in the province.
- Communities are developing language revitalization plans, have trained staff, and are implementing programs that make a difference by documenting the languages and supporting new speakers.
- Recent research shows that people are benefiting from provincial investments in cultural revitalization, which supports B.C.'s economic commitments to build a sustainable economy with good paying jobs.

5. Is this enough money to save all Indigenous languages?

- No. There remains much work to be done to revitalize Indigenous languages and cultures and that work needs to be done in partnership with First Nations and the Government of Canada.
- Research has identified that the investment and scope of work is significant.
- However, B.C.'s stable, predictable funding is an important improvement and demonstrates our government's commitment to reconciliation in action.

6. Why are First Nations languages and culture important to the province?

- Article 13 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their languages, oral traditions, writing systems and literatures.
- We are working with First Nations across B.C. so they can fully exercise their distinct rights related to their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and languages.
- There is incredible language diversity in British Columbia – there are 36 First Nations languages.
- Together, they make up more than half of all First Nations languages in Canada.
- These are the original languages of this land and contribute to the unique diversity of cultures in B.C.
- Together, the First Peoples' Cultural Council and the First Peoples' Foundation are laying the groundwork so that First Nations languages can be passed on to future generations.

7. What is an example of the successes you've seen?

- In Bella Bella, with funding support through FPCC, the Haíłzaqv [*HELT'-zuk*] language revitalization program has grown from one staff member to over 50.
- Haíłzaqv programming now includes immersion learning through a preschool language nest, adult language classes, mentor-apprentice opportunities and curriculum development.
- The Haíłzaqv language is being documented through recordings, archiving and digitization. Some language learners are now teachers with careers in language revitalization in their remote community.

8. How does this investment support FPCC's mandate for heritage and arts?

- FPCC will allocate \$3 million per year towards their heritage and arts programs.
- The Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Sport, through the BC Arts Council and Creative BC, will allocate \$2.475 million in 2025/26 toward FPCC's arts program.
- In 2021, the Province allocated \$5 million to the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation to establish the First People's Cultural Heritage Fund to create opportunities for First Nations communities in B.C. to protect, share, and revitalize their unique cultures.

9. What is the BC government and FPCC doing about the federal decrease in funding?

- The Province and FPCC are working collaboratively with the federal government to demonstrate the need for enhanced investment to support revitalization of First Nations heritage, language, culture, and arts in British Columbia.

10. Why did the Province allocate \$12 million a year for language revitalization from the \$15 million a year in annual program funding to the First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC)?

- The First Nations language revitalization has been a government commitment since 2018 when the Province made a historical investment of \$50 million.
- First Nations communities and FPCC have done tremendous work and made significant progress toward creating fluency and documenting the 36 languages Indigenous to B.C.
- These are the original languages of this land and contribute to the unique diversity of the cultures in B.C.
- The new \$12 million annual allocation (from the \$15 million to FPCC) is permanent, on-going and stable funding, allowing communities to plan long-term and protect those employed doing this important cultural revitalization work.
- It also supports the Province's commitment under the Declaration Act Action plan to provide sustainable funding for language revitalization.

11. What is the new funding for modern treaty Nations?

- Last year, the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and the Alliance of BC Modern Treaty Nations announced a new, co-developed funding model to better equip Modern Treaty Nations to meet their obligations as governments to deliver services, create local partnerships and represent the interests of their citizens.
- This year's budget includes \$27.38 million over the next three years to support these agreements, including \$8.39 million in 2025.
- Through the new, co-developed funding model, Modern Treaty Nations will be better equipped to partner with the Province on treaty activities related to co-management of land

and resources in their territories. The funding model enables Modern Treaty Nations to participate more broadly in the provincial resource economy.

12. Why is the funding forecast to increase in future years (2026/27 and 2027/28)?

- Future funding years are adjusted for inflation and include forecasts of future treaties that could be effective in 2028.

13. Can you explain the property tax exemptions for school, rural and treaty-related foreshore?

- Our new budget includes property tax changes for both Modern Treaty First Nations and for First Nations who hold land outside of reserve land. These measures further support government's commitments to reconciliation.
- As part of this, the Province is exempting First Nations from paying rural and school property taxes on certain types of land.
- Exempt properties will include provincial Crown land, former Provincial properties, and land purchased with help from the Province, as long as it is vacant or used for cultural and community purposes.
- Separately, Modern Treaty First Nations and their public institutions will be exempt from property tax within their treaty designated foreshore areas.

Facts:

- Both exemptions are effective in 2026
- The school and rural tax exemptions are expected to cost \$3.4 million over three years; about \$250,000 a year for the treaty related foreshore exemption
- Crown properties are increasingly transferred to First Nations and held in fee simple.
- Previously ad hoc remission orders to First Nations' requests for relief
- Provincial property tax does not apply on Modern Treaty First Nation Lands or Nisga'a Lands. It also does not apply on reserve lands where a First Nation exercises taxation authority under federal legislation.

14. What about transferred land that will not be kept vacant?

- This exemption is not meant to apply to properties operating in the commercial mainstream.
- Property taxes are crucial to the funding of local and provincial services, which benefit all property owners.
- We are committed to working with First Nations on tax issues while ensuring that B.C.'s system funds provincial priorities and continues to balance the needs of everyone in B.C.

15. What amendments were made to the Property Law Act and the Land Title Act last year?

- Last year, B.C. took an important step on the path to reconciliation, ensuring First Nations can own property in their own names.
- First Nations should not face financial hurdles to transfer property from proxies into their own names.

- The Province is now eliminating the Property Transfer Tax on these transfers, so First Nations can move property under their direct ownership without worrying about that added cost.
- These changes help advance meaningful reconciliation by enabling First Nations to have more flexibility and self-determination in how they hold property.

Facts:

- Property Law Act and the Land Title Act amended May 2024
- Ensures First Nations can acquire, hold and register land in their own names — just as individuals, Modern Treaty Nations and corporations already could
- Before that, most used proxies such as individuals, corporations, or non-profit organizations to indirectly hold and register land on their behalf
- Changes to act left First Nations responsible for taxes associated with the transfers
- There is no significant financial impact from exempting these transfers
- Exemption only applies to land beneficially owned by the First Nation prior to May 21, 2024

16. Supporting economic development

- We know a healthy, sustainable economy requires meaningful involvement and equitable opportunity for First Nations. Budget 2025 measures build on ongoing work like:
 - A BC Hydro call-for-power, which will require minimum 25% equity ownership by First Nations
 - The Budget 2024 announcement of a First Nations Equity Financing framework to support their participation in major industrial projects.
- As part of implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Province has been working towards a future where Indigenous governments can fulfill their responsibilities, care for their people, and manage their territories in ways that reflect their values.
- Budget 2025 forecasts that over \$680 million over three years will be shared with First Nations through natural resource revenue sharing, as the benefits of economic activity are returned directly to the community.
- First Nations are also expected to receive \$300 million through gaming revenue, to support self-government and self-determination, strong health communities, and services that make life better for families.

17. What is the First Nations Equity Financing Framework?

- A healthy, sustainable economy requires that First Nations have meaningful involvement and ownership in economic projects.
- That's one of the reasons Budget 2024 announced our intention to develop the First Nations Equity Financing Program.
- The main focus of the program is to support First Nations equity participation in new or expansion projects in their territories in the energy, natural resource and other related sectors that bring economic growth, jobs, new revenues and other benefits to both First Nations and British Columbia.

- We've worked with First Nations organizations, industry and the federal government regarding its recently announced National Indigenous Loan Guarantee program, and we are close to finalizing the program.
- We expect to have more to say soon.
- In the meantime, work is already underway to assess eligibility of some potential large projects in the energy sector.

18. Does Budget 2025 provide support the Declaration Act Secretariat's work on alignment of laws?

- Budget 2025 continues stable funding for the Declaration Act Secretariat to deliver its work to guide and assist the Province to ensure provincial laws align with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and are developed in consultation and co-operation with Indigenous Peoples.
- Implementing the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act – including alignment of laws – is a cross-government priority.
- Each ministry is responsible for funding and implementing their specific actions found within the Declaration Act Action Plan.
- All ministries have identified actions and aligned – or are aligning – their priorities and budgets to implement these actions.

19. Why does the Ministry's Treaty and Other budget increase in 2025/26?

- The ministry budget is funded to match the ongoing cost of signed agreements.
- The Treaty and Other Agreements budget is \$105.204 million, a net increase of \$10.500 or 11.1% over Budget 2024.
- \$477.657 million is projected to be paid to First Nations through treaty and non-treaty agreements.
- The increase in 2025/26 is primarily due to funding for Modern Treaty Nations Fiscal Relationship Agreement amendments and increased revenue sharing for LNG.

20. Why are you putting even more funding into agreements with First Nations (treaty and other)?

- We are advancing treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements as part of the ongoing work of reconciliation with First Nations, many of which entail multi-year financial commitments.
- The ministry budget is funded to match signed agreement costs.
- Budget 2025 allows us to meet our multi-year commitments to existing agreements and other government-to-government arrangements like revenue sharing.
- While some argue we should return to decades-long court cases and conflict, the path of partnership is the path to a stronger B.C. We are working shoulder-to-shoulder with First Nations on:
 - co-operation and co-investment in housing, infrastructure, and community safety,
 - developing new ways to move projects forward in partnership, especially related to the sustainable development of natural resources and in response to US tariffs,
 - ending Indigenous-specific racism and encouraging cultural wellbeing and,
 - supporting economic development and good jobs.

- Families and communities around B.C. depend on sustainable resource development to keep people working, businesses open, and local economies running.
- Through our actions, we are demonstrating a deep and resolute commitment to shared economic prosperity, and to building an inclusive clean economy.
- The reality is this: the path to economic development in B.C. is through partnership with First Nations. This is how we build a stronger B.C. that we all benefit from.

21. What is happening with revenue sharing?

- Revenue Sharing Forecasts are impacted by a number of factors including:
 - Total number of signed agreements.
 - Commodity price fluctuations for items such as copper and coal as well as mine operating profit margins or mineral tax (shared through Economic Community Development Agreements).
 - Resort income on accommodations (shared through Recreational Economic Community Development Agreements).
 - Increases in stumpage values and harvesting activities (shared through Forestry Consultation and Revenue Sharing Agreements).
 - Higher oil and gas royalties
 - And the economy as a whole.

22. Are you providing funding for land transfers?

- Financing transactions for land transfers allow the ministry to prioritize private land purchases over the three-year plan as part of treaty or other agreements. As part of Budget 2025, IRR has an annual appropriation of \$30 million.

23. What is going on with the First Citizens Fund?

- The First Citizens Fund is a special fund within government's Consolidated Revenue Fund and the monies do not come from the ministry budget.
- Fund revenue is interest-driven. It will provide approximately \$2.046 million to support programs in 2025/26 which is an increase of \$0.233 million from 2024/25.
- This funding supports Indigenous small business development, First Nations language preservation, bursaries for Indigenous post-secondary students, and assistance for elders to attend their annual gathering.

24. Government is forecasting a decline in Columbia River Treaty revenues of more than \$30 million in 2025/26. Why?

- In June 2023, B.C. announced three interim revenue sharing agreements with the Ktunaxa Nation, Secwépemc Nation and Syilx Okanagan Nation, which allocate to each Nation 5% of the revenue generated through the sale of Canada's share of downstream power benefits under the Columbia River Treaty, otherwise known as the Canadian Entitlement.
- The total amount will depend on the Treaty downstream power benefit determination, which varies from year-to-year, and energy market prices.
- The interim agreements will share this revenue over four years, ending March 31, 2026. These agreements are not part of Canada-U.S. negotiations to modernize the Treaty.

25. Government is forecasting an increase in revenue sharing for oil and gas royalties of \$75 million. Why?

- This increase is due to the extensions signed with the Treaty 8 First Nations.

26. What kind of support do you provide BC Friendship Centres?

- Friendship centres throughout B.C. provide many essential services for Indigenous Peoples living in urban areas, including child care, counselling, food and shelter.

27. How many people work for MIRR and where are they located?

- As of March 1, 2025, MIRR (including DAS) had 296 staff in 15 locations around the province.

- Locations include:

Castlegar	1	Vancouver	4
Cranbrook	2	Vernon	2
Fort St John	3	Victoria	246
Kamloops	7	Williams Lake	3
Nanaimo	9	Golden	1
Prince George	2	Port Alberni	1
Smithers	8	Daajing Giids	1
Surrey	6		

28. How many FTEs are there in MIRR and how does this compare to past years?

Year	Average FTE burn
2024/25 – Feb 2025	275.87
2023/24 – YTD Average	275.06
2022/23 – YTD Average	256.59
2021/22 – YTD Average	246.20
2020/21 - YTD Average	229.40
2019/20 – YTD Average	235.35

For FPCC:

2024/25 (average) 61.5

2023/24 (average) 63.9

FTEs as of March 1, 2025: **64.6**

Head count as of March 1, 2025: **65**

29. How many vacant positions are there?

- The number of positions the ministry can accommodate within its budget depends on many factors including the staff mix throughout the year; thus, the number of vacant positions will fluctuate.

30. Why is there a decrease in the Minister's Office?

- Minister Office budgets were reviewed as part of Budget 2025 to reflect positions within Minister's Office staff, as well as to bring current budgets in line with the approved budgets set by the Office of the Premier.

Budget 2024	871
Salary and Benefit adjustment	-56
Operating (travel) adjustment	28
Budget 2025	843

- There are no changes in staffing levels as a result of this decrease.
- 2025/26 continues to support 7 positions including Minister.

#	Position
1	Chief of Staff
2	Ministerial Assistant
3	Ministerial Assistant
4	Executive Assistant
5	Administrative Coordinator
6	Administrative Assistant

31. What is the Minister's compensation?

- Information on compensation is available on the following website: [Remuneration and Allowances – Members' Guide to Policy and Resources \(leg.bc.ca\)](https://leg.bc.ca/remuneration-and-allowances)
- The compensation as of April 1, 2024, is broken into 2 parts:
 - Basic Compensation as an MLA is \$119,532.72
 - Top-up of 50% for being a Minister is \$59,766.37
 - Total \$179,299

32. How much was spent on travel by the Minister?

- The Minister's Office travel budget is \$85,000 and was the same last year.
- Minister Rankin's travel costs from April 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024, were: \$23,038.
- Minister Boyle's travel costs from October 1 to present is \$8,198.
- Minister travel is proactively disclosed every quarter.

Estimates & Expenditure Management

- Trade turmoil is adding to an already challenging fiscal environment around the world.
- We are committed to making sure every dollar we spend has the greatest impact in the lives of British Columbians: to grow the economy, to protect and strengthen the services people count on, and lower costs.
- With significant population growth and a lot of programs launched over the past eight years, now is the right time to review all existing programs to ensure they are working as intended.
- We are looking for efficiencies and administrative savings as well as programs that are not working or have served their purpose and run their course.
- Ultimately, this will strengthen B.C.'s finances, and protect the key services and opportunities that people need to thrive and achieve their goals in B.C.

What are your ministry's targets and what are you looking to cut?

- This review is about finding efficiencies and making sure spending is focused on making the biggest impact to the lives of British Columbians, not slashing services.
- It is a forward-looking, strategic process to focus on outcomes for people – in the way we do business and make decisions in the public service.
- Protecting and strengthening critical services is a key priority.

What programs are on your radar/are you cutting program X?

- We are in the initial stages of the review process. It is important work, and I am not going to pass early judgment on any single program or initiative.

Do you expect layoffs in your ministry?

- We will always need a skilled workforce to design and deliver critical services – that won't change as we work to strengthen our finances.
- We expect to see some decreases in staffing through the current public service hiring pause through attrition – retirements and not filling non-critical vacant positions.

How are you going to meet ministry goal X while you are making cuts?

- *[Recognize importance of the specific goal or commitment]*
- The way to achieve our goals is to have a strong fiscal foundation so people can build a good life in B.C.
- This is about efficiencies and ensuring programs are working for people.

For general questions on expenditure management – process, timing:

- At this stage in the process, you can direct most of your questions to Ministry of Finance and Premier's Estimates.
- Minister Bailey and the Ministry of Finance are leading this work and you are best to canvass them for details.
- Every ministry is a part of this and with so many programs and services launched over the past eight years, now is the right time for a review.
- The questions I am asking myself and ministry staff are:
 - How is the program managed?
 - Is it a good return on investment? Are we serving the people of BC as well as we could?
 - Is there room for improvement and savings?
 - Are existing programs still relevant and getting good outcomes for people?
 - How is it helping people?
 - Is this supporting jobs and helping our economy?

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Budget Highlights

Ministry Budget

- MIRRs 2025/26 budget is \$186.958M. **This represents a \$26.862M 16.8% increase from the previous year.** The net budget change is comprised of:
 - o \$16.132M net increase in the Ministry Operations Vote;
 - o \$10.500M net increase in government transfers under the Treaty and Other Agreements Vote;
 - o \$0.007M increase to the Declaration Act Secretariat;
 - o \$0.223M increase in government transfers under the First Citizen Fund;
- This budget will continue to allow MIRR to effectively deliver its mandate.
 - o The \$16.132M increase in the Ministry Operations Vote is made up of:
 - \$15.000M increase to fund First Peoples' Cultural Council Programs;
 - \$0.740M to fund Shared Recovery Wage Mandate;
 - \$0.420M increment to First Peoples' Cultural Council (Budget 2023)
 - \$(0.028M) net decrease to Minister's Office.
 - o \$10.500M net increase in the Treaty and Other Agreements vote to match funded agreement costs.
 - \$6.366M net increase in Treaty agreements primarily due to Modern Treaty Nations Fiscal Relationship Agreement amendments
 - \$3.774M net increase in Non treaty agreements, primarily due to projected LNG agreements
 - \$0.360M net increase in Revenue Sharing due to an increase in the Recovery to Vote
 - o \$0.007M increase for the Declaration Act Secretariat to fund Shared Recovery wage mandate.
 - o The First Citizen Fund increase of \$0.223M due to a small increase in investment fund revenues.

\$ millions	2024/25	\$Change	2024/25 restated	2025/26	\$ Change	% Change
Vote 32 - Ministry Operations	59,002	-	59,002	75,134	16,132	27.3%
Vote 33 - Treaty & Other Agreements Funding	94,704	-	94,704	105,204	10,500	11.1%
Vote 35 - Declaration Act Secretariat	4,567	-	4,567	4,574	7	0.2%
Sub-Total	158,273	-	158,273	184,912	26,639	39%
First Citizens Fund	1,823	-	1,823	2,046	223	12.2%
Total	160,096	-	160,096	186,958	26,862	16.8%

-

Budget 2025

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Minister Briefing

Ministry Budget 2024/25- 2027/28

Corporate Services for the
Natural Resource Ministries

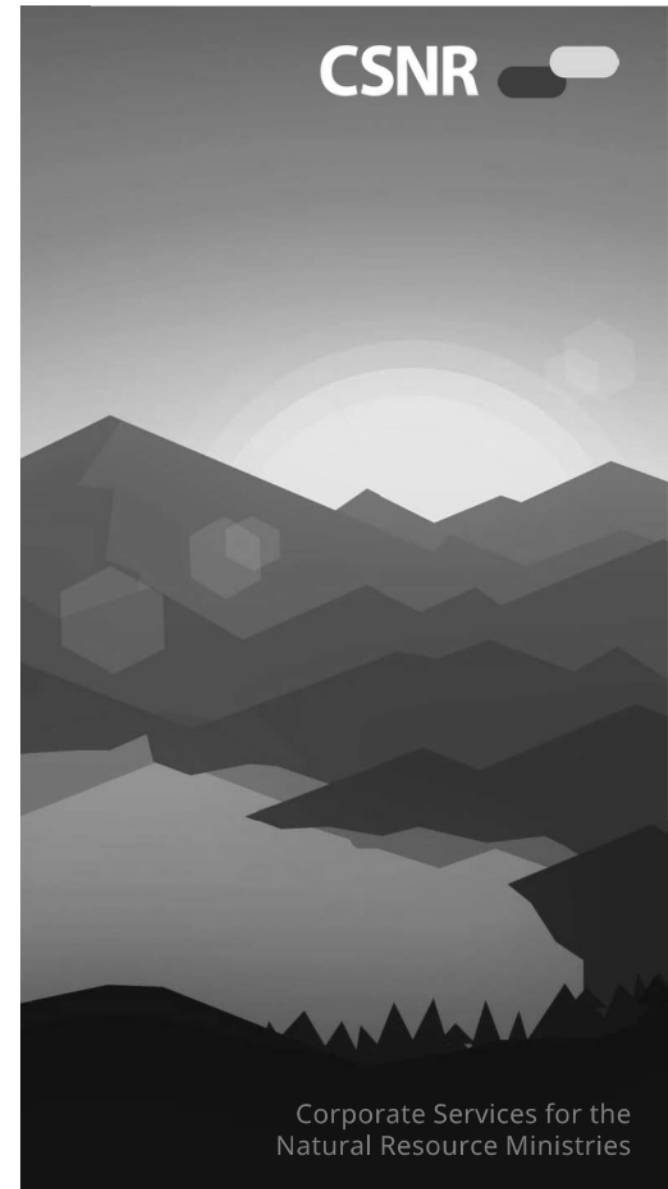


	2024/25 Restated	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Ministry Operations	\$000			
Negotiations and Regional Operations Division	17,897	18,236	18,236	18,236
Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives Division	24,763	40,444	40,444	40,444
Reconciliation Transformation and Strategies	3,558	3,619	3,619	3,619
Executive and Support Services	12,784	12,835	12,835	12,835
Total Ministry Operations	\$59,002	\$75,134	\$75,134	\$75,134
<i>Changes from Budget 2024</i>		<i>\$16,132</i>	<i>\$16,132</i>	<i>\$16,132</i>
<i>Changes Year over Year</i>		<i>\$16,132</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>
Treaty and Other Agreements Funding	94,704	105,204	106,732	118,694
Declaration Act Secretariat	4,567	4,574	4,574	4,574
First Citizens Fund Special Account	1,823	2,046	2,209	2,209
Total Ministry Budget	\$160,096	\$186,958	\$188,649	\$200,611
<u>Operations Budget Changes from Budget 2024</u>				
First People's Cultural Council Programs		\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Shared Recovery Wage Mandate		\$740	\$740	\$740
Minister's Office		(\$28)	(\$28)	(\$28)
Prior Year Approval:				
First Peoples' Cultural Council Resources		\$420	\$420	\$420
Total Operations Changes		\$16,132	\$16,132	\$16,132
Percent Change to Operations from Budget 2024		27%	27%	27%

Budget 2025 Highlights

Ministry Operations

- \$45.000M over the fiscal plan to support programming for the First Peoples' Cultural Council,
- \$2.241M over the fiscal plan moved from contingency to base to fund the shared recovery mandate,
- (\$0.084M) reduction over the fiscal plan to the Minister's Office to reflect the updated structure as approved by Premier's Office.



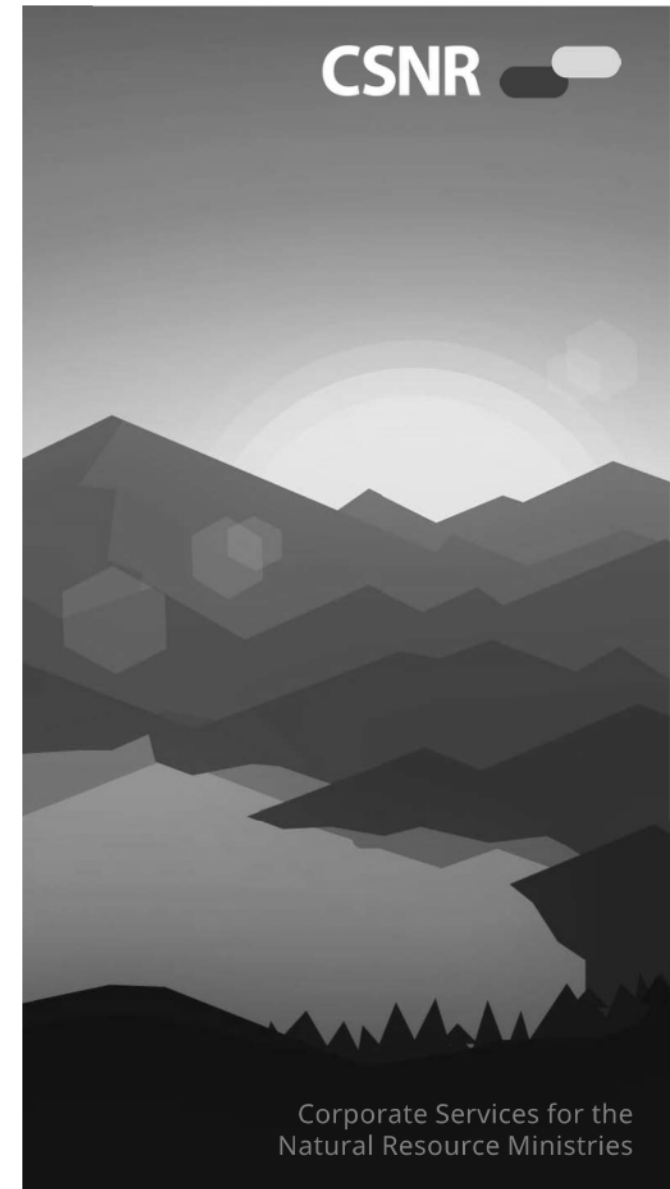
Treaty & Other Agreements 2024/25 – 2027/28

	2024/25 Restated	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Treaty and Other Agreements Vote	\$000			
Treaty	4,242	10,608	11,054	12,351
Non-Treaty	14,145	14,036	14,017	14,017
IFP	52,700	52,700	52,700	52,700
LNG	16,417	20,300	20,726	31,391
Revenue Sharing (Gross)	379,442	380,112	176,980	159,036
Revenue Offset	(\$372,242)	(\$372,552)	(\$168,745)	(\$150,801)
Total Treaty & Other Vote	\$94,704	\$105,204	\$106,732	\$118,694
<i>Changes from Budget 2024</i>		\$10,500	\$12,028	\$23,990
<i>Changes Year over Year</i>		\$10,500	\$1,528	\$11,962
Agreement Budget Changes from Budget 2024				
Modern Treaty Nation Fiscal Relationship Agreement		\$8,393	\$8,858	\$10,135
Treaty Other		(\$2,027)	(\$2,046)	(\$2,026)
Liquified Natural Gas Agreements		\$3,884	\$4,309	\$14,974
Revenue Sharing (Net)		\$360	\$1,035	\$1,035
Non Treaty		(\$110)	(\$128)	(\$128)
Total Treaty & Other Changes		\$10,500	\$12,028	\$23,990
Percent Changes to Treaty & Other from Budget 2024		11%	13%	25%

Budget 2025 Highlights

Treaty & Other Agreements

- \$27.386M over the fiscal plan moved from contingency to base for Modern Treaty Nations Fiscal Relationship Agreement amendments,
- Vote is funded to match signed agreements and projected Revenue sharing payments.



Financing Transactions 2024/25 – 2027/28

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Schedule D - Inventory	43,867	30,000	30,000	30,000
Schedule E - Gaming	100,000	96,000	100,000	103,000
	143,867	126,000	130,000	133,000

- Schedule D – private land purchases held in inventory until transferred to First Nations under final agreement.
 - As part of Budget 2025 IRR proposed a new approach to set a maximum annual appropriation on a three-year basis.
- Schedule E – gaming revenue collected by the Province and disbursed to the BC First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing Limited Partnership.

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

Budget 2025 Estimates Summary

By Core Business												
\$000s												
Budget 2025 Decisions								Budget 2025 and Prior Year Decisions for Out Years				
Estimates 2024/25	Restated Estimates 2024/25	(1) First Peoples' Cultural Council Programs	(2) Wage Mandate	(3) Minister's Office Adjustment	(4) First Peoples' Cultural Council Resources (Budget 2023)	(5) Spending Plan Adjustments	Estimates 2025/26	(6) Spending Plan Adjustment	2026/27 Estimates	(7) Spending Plan Adjustment	2027/28 Estimates	
Ministry Operations												
Negotiations and Regional Operations	17,897	17,897		339			18,236		18,236		18,236	
Strategic Partnership and Initiatives	24,763	24,763	15,000	261		420	40,444		40,444		40,444	
Reconciliation, Transformation and Strategies	3,558	3,558		61			3,619		3,619		3,619	
Minister's Office	871	871			(28)		843		843		843	
Executive and Support Services	11,913	11,913		79			11,992		11,992		11,992	
Sub-Total	59,002	59,002	15,000	740	(28)	420	-	75,134	-	75,134	-	75,134
Treaty and Other Agreements												
Treaty and Other Agreements Funding	4,242	4,242					6,366	10,608	446	11,054	1,297	12,351
Non Treaty Funding	90,462	90,462					4,134	94,596	1,082	95,678	10,665	106,343
Sub-Total	94,704	94,704	-	-	-	-	10,500	105,204	1,528	106,732	11,962	118,694
Declaration Act Secretariat	4,567	4,567		7			-	4,574		4,574		4,574
First Citizens Fund	1,823	1,823					223	2,046	163	2,209	-	2,209
TOTAL MINISTRY	160,096	160,096	15,000	747	(28)	420	10,723	186,958	1,691	188,649	11,962	200,611

Budget 2025 Decisions:

- (1) stable funding for **First Peoples' Cultural Council** First Nation Languages, Arts and Heritage Programs
- (2) (3) The ministry including DAS received a budget lift to support the negotiated **wage mandate** and a salary adjustment to the **Ministers Office**
- (4) Increments to Budget 2023 approval to maintain current staffing levels, facilities and ongoing operations of the **First Peoples Cultural Council**
- (5) Treaty and Other annual **spending plan adjustment** updated based on signed agreements in the Ministry. Funded to match agreement costs with the ability to go to Treasury Board throughout the year if needed.
- (5) First Citizen Fund annual **spending plan adjustment** based on projected increases/deceases in investment fund revenues

Budget 2025 and Prior Year Decisions for Out Years

- (6) Treaty and Other annual **spending plan adjustment** updated based on signed agreements in the Ministry. Funded to match agreement costs with the ability to go to Treasury Board throughout the year if needed.
- (7) First Citizen Fund annual **spending plan adjustment** based on projected increases/deceases in investment fund revenues

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

2025/26 – 2027/28 Service Plan

March 2025



For more information on the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation contact:

PO BOX 9100
STN PROV GOVT
VICTORIA, BC
V8W 9B1

1-800-880-1022

Or visit our website at
<http://www.gov.bc.ca/irr>

Published by the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation 2025/26 – 2027/28 Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C Boyle".

Honourable Christine Boyle
Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
February 14, 2025

Table of Contents

Minister's Accountability Statement	3
Strategic Direction.....	5
Purpose of the Ministry	5
Operating Environment.....	6
Performance Planning.....	8
Financial Summary.....	16
Appendix A: Declaration Act Secretariat.....	17
Appendix B: Public Sector Organizations	19

Strategic Direction

In 2025/26, the Government of British Columbia will continue to prioritize delivering the services and infrastructure needed for people to build good lives in strong communities.

To support this objective, Government will focus on growing the economy, responding to the threat of tariffs, creating good paying jobs, improving affordability, strengthening health care and education, and making communities safer.

Government will also continue deepening relationships with Indigenous Peoples while advancing implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan.

This 2025/26 service plan outlines how the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation will support the government's priorities and selected action items identified in the Minister's January 2025 [Mandate Letter](#).

Purpose of the Ministry

The [Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation](#) (the Ministry or MIRR) guides and helps coordinate the Province of British Columbia's efforts to achieve true and lasting reconciliation with [Indigenous Peoples](#)¹ by working in respectful partnerships that recognize inherent rights.

Reconciliation is important to everyone as we work together to address historic wrongs through the path laid out by the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission \(TRC\) of Canada: Calls to Action](#). These efforts create a better province for all.

As the first province in Canada to recognize and uphold Indigenous Peoples' human rights in law through the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) (Declaration Act), British Columbia is implementing the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UN Declaration) as our shared framework for reconciliation.

The Declaration Act supports the B.C. government to deepen relationships with Indigenous Peoples through an [action plan](#) that outlines measures to advance the objectives of the UN Declaration. The alignment of provincial laws with the UN Declaration enables government to enter into shared decision-making agreements with a broad range of Indigenous governments.

The Ministry furthers [reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples](#) by collaboratively developing policy and practices, and negotiating and implementing proactive, enduring [agreements, partnerships, and treaties based on recognition of rights](#). The Ministry's focus is to build

¹ The term "Indigenous" used throughout this document is inclusive of all peoples of Indigenous ancestry, including First Nations (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit.

lasting relationships with Indigenous Peoples through flexible agreements that can evolve over time and collaborative approaches to policy making.

The Ministry engages with First Nations governments, communities, organizations, as well as treaty, federal, and municipal partners, stakeholders, and the public. While reconciliation is a whole-of-government responsibility, the Ministry provides guidance and leadership to other areas of government on establishing and enhancing relationships with Indigenous Peoples.

Reconciliation commitments are achieved by prioritizing collaboration and engagement with Indigenous Peoples through anti-racist, trauma-informed and culturally safe practices. Strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities² and leveraging Indigenous knowledge and perspectives improves social and economic outcomes for Indigenous Peoples and all British Columbians.

The Ministry is also responsible for the Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women, which provides advice to the B.C. government on how to improve the quality of life for Indigenous women in B.C., and the First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC), a provincial Crown corporation formed by the Government of British Columbia in 1990 to administer the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Program.

Operating Environment

Reconciliation is a provincial imperative in B.C., embedded in law, that represents a shared commitment to ensure that the province is a place where the rights of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples are recognized. In this work, MIRR is guided by the UN Declaration, the TRC of Canada's 94 Calls to Action, the Draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples, the British Columbia Treaty Commission Act and the First Nations Treaty process, Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) and relevant case law.

Global pressures, including a shifting economic forecast and ongoing climate-related emergencies, affect every British Columbian. These external challenges are compounded by the possibility of tariffs from our southern neighbours that could harm both Canadians and Americans, and a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape marked by instability, rising hate, and global unrest. In this environment, it is more critical than ever to work in partnership to advance reconciliation and strengthen government-to-government relationships with First Nations and other Indigenous peoples in B.C., so that we can face these challenges together. Despite significant challenges that disproportionately impact Indigenous Peoples and the ongoing trauma of revelations from former residential school sites, First Nations and other Indigenous peoples in B.C. continue to work collaboratively with the Ministry towards our shared reconciliation goals. They have contributed their time and resources to ensure Indigenous knowledge and expertise are brought into this work, benefiting all British Columbians.

² The term "communities" means the diversity of Indigenous communities as defined by Indigenous Peoples and includes descriptions such as urban, rural, metropolitan, remote, land-based and reserve.

The Ministry and the provincial government remain committed to a distinctions-based approach, recognizing and respecting the unique rights, interests, priorities, and concerns of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples. This approach requires that our relationships and engagement with each group may involve different methods and produce varied outcomes, depending on their distinct needs and contexts.

In alignment with the government's broader mandate to combat racism and promote equity, the Ministry is implementing recommendations from an internal anti-racism and equity review. Additionally, the Ministry will explore collaborating with the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives to address and combat anti-Indigenous racism.

Performance Planning

Goal 1: Advance equitable social and economic outcomes of Indigenous Peoples

The Ministry is committed to advancing social and economic outcomes in Indigenous communities in comprehensive and holistic ways that are determined by and organized around each community's priorities. These efforts include sharing the benefits of economic development with First Nations and increasing opportunities for the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the economy.

Objective 1.1: Partner on shared initiatives that improve the quality of life of Indigenous Peoples

The Ministry works with Indigenous, provincial, and federal agencies and partners to advance opportunities that improve the health and wellness of Indigenous communities through community-focused initiatives.

Key Strategies

- Continue to partner with First Nations, in collaboration with other Ministries, to strengthen community health, well-being and self-determination.
- Work with the [Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women](#) and the [First Peoples' Cultural Council](#) to advance solutions that support their respective mandates.
- Promote the work of urban Indigenous organizations including Aboriginal Friendship Centres and urban Indigenous coalitions to deliver Indigenous-centered services that support cultural connections, and create spaces that encourage dialogue reflective of urban Indigenous reconciliation priorities.
- Support the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs in their work with First Nations to address the housing shortage throughout the province and enhance alignment of housing programs on and off reserve.
- Support Indigenous language revitalization through sustainable funding.

Discussion

The Ministry continues to work in close consultation and cooperation with First Nations and other Indigenous peoples in B.C. to ensure that communities' health, wellbeing, and sociocultural priorities throughout the province are actionable. These partnerships invest in economic development, cultural revitalization, human resource capacity building, education, justice, health and family services, and institutional and infrastructure development.

The Ministry provides annual operational funding to the First Peoples' Cultural Council to revitalize languages, heritage, cultures and arts. The Ministry also continues to engage with the Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women to identify and action priorities that

improve the quality of life of Indigenous women across B.C. The Ministry supports reconciliation priorities identified by urban Indigenous Peoples through the implementation of [Actions 4.21- 4.24](#) in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan.

Work is underway to further develop indicators that report on reconciliation outcomes associated with implementation of the Declaration Act Action Plan. As this work continues to evolve, the Ministry is developing an outcomes framework, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, tied to the Declaration Action Plan, to highlight opportunities for alignment. The Ministry will seek opportunities to introduce performance measures in future service plans to support reporting on this objective.

Objective 1.2: Support First Nation communities in advancing self determination and governance building

The Ministry works with First Nations to advance self-determination and governance building, supporting economic, social, and cultural initiatives aligned with the priorities of individual communities and transitioning delivery of public services to First Nations governments.

Key Strategies

- Continue engagement on the new distinctions-based fiscal framework, co-developed with First Nations in partnership with the Ministry of Finance, that supports the operation of First Nations' governments.
- Continue to advance work with other ministries and First Nations partners to co-develop and implement new policy frameworks for resource revenue-sharing and other fiscal mechanisms with First Nations.
- Collaborate, align and leverage opportunities with the federal government to support First Nations self-governance, culture, language and heritage.
- Prioritize comprehensive, tri-partite reconciliation and self-determination through treaty implementation and ratification processes.
- In partnership with the Haida Nation, implement the [Gaayhllxid • Gíihlagalgang](#) "Rising Tide" Haida Title Lands Agreement.

Discussion

The Ministry, in partnership with the Ministry of Finance, continues engagement on the new fiscal framework with First Nations. As the New Fiscal Framework is co-developed, the ministry will re-evaluate performance measures and targets to ensure consistency with new revenue sharing and other fiscal mechanisms. As described in the discussion section underneath Objective 1.1, the Ministry will review opportunities for alignment of Action Plan indicators as they become available to support reporting under this objective in future service plans.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2019/20 Baseline	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
[1a] Cumulative number of community well-being initiatives ¹	16	32	36	40	44

Data source: Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

¹ The term community is inclusive of all First Nations, Métis, and urban Indigenous communities.

Discussion

Community well-being initiatives are reconciliation processes where communities and the B.C. government work in partnership to identify and implement socio-cultural priorities. These partnerships invest in economic development, cultural revitalization, human resource capacity building, education, justice, health and family services, and institutional and infrastructure development. These arrangements involve highly complex, trust-based relationships which take time to nurture, and require significant internal resources from the Ministry and First Nation(s) to develop. The baseline was chosen as it most accurately reflects the formal emergence of these relationship-driven reconciliation initiatives, which are not generally lands-based or negotiations-based.

Performance Measure	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
[1b] Number of new opportunities ¹ for First Nations to participate in revenue sharing	1	2	2	2

Data source: Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

¹This includes new revenue sharing opportunities negotiated into particular agreements. Targets have been adjusted as renewals of existing revenue sharing agreements are not included. Targets have been adjusted as the First Nations Clean Energy Program has been transferred to the Ministry of Energy and Climate Solutions.

Discussion

Sharing revenue with First Nations communities is an important reconciliation tool that supports implementation of the UN Declaration and the self-determined pursuit of economic, social, and community development. Like all governments, First Nations require sources of revenue to support capacity and service delivery. Ensuring First Nations share in the wealth generated by economic opportunities helps support economic growth in First Nations communities and for all British Columbians. The Province has committed to co-developing and implementing new distinctions-based policy frameworks for resource revenue-sharing. The Province expects the target for this performance measure (i.e., two opportunities per year) to continue until this work is completed and new models for revenue sharing are available. The Declaration Act Action Plan contemplates a five-year timeline for this work.

Goal 2: Work in partnership to achieve true and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

True and lasting reconciliation is a cross-government priority requiring collaboration with ministry partners and engagement with all British Columbians.

Objective 2.1: Implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, and Relevant Case Law.

All ministries are accountable for implementing provincial reconciliation commitments. Supporting this, the Ministry works to develop cross-government tools and approaches that achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration through implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, and other relevant legislation and case law.

Key Strategies

- Building on the Distinctions-Based Approach Primer, release a companion document to provide guidance to public service employees on the practical application of the Province's Distinctions-Based Approach with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.
- Continue to prioritize Declaration Act Action Plan implementation, including [Action 1.1](#) to work with First Nations partners to address territorial overlap and boundary resolution, and work towards an updated Declaration Act Action Plan by 2027.
- Support cross-government implementation of the Declaration Act by providing advice to government ministries and agencies to integrate the objectives of the UN Declaration into their policy and operations.
- Deliver a Declaration Act annual report developed in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples to report on progress made to implement the Declaration Act. This includes the alignment of laws, detailed reporting on actions underway, and advancement of modern treaties through the Shared Priorities Framework.
- Continue to work closely with the Ministry of the Attorney General to effectively engage and honour the Directives on Civil Litigation involving Indigenous Peoples.

Discussion

The Ministry continues its work to support implementation of government's reconciliation commitments and uphold First Nations rights and title in line with legislation and case law in the context of an evolving legal landscape.

The Declaration Act Secretariat ([Appendix A](#)), which is a central agency within government and distinct from the Ministry, continues to lead and guide the alignment of laws with the UN Declaration. The Ministry continues to advance objectives outlined in the Declaration Action Plan and is working to ensure laws and policies within the scope of its own mandate are aligned with and contribute to implementation of the UN Declaration. The Ministry is

responsible for working in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples for many of these actions and is working to support, where indicated in the plan, other ministry partners on shared actions.

To support this work, the Declaration Act Secretariat created “The Interim Approach to Implement the Requirements of Section 3 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.” It provides every ministry and sector of government with clear, transparent processes for how they can work together with Indigenous Peoples in developing provincial laws, policies and practices, as required under the Declaration Act. Also, the Ministry continues to work with First Nations to advance decision-making agreements as outlined in the Declaration Act, to develop effective approaches to legislative amendments to avoid delays in implementing these agreements, and to release annual reports to highlight work and progress on implementation of the Act.

The Ministry provides financial support through the Declaration Act Engagement Fund which supports First Nations’ efforts to work with the Province to implement the Declaration Act Action Plan and align provincial laws with the UN Declaration. This fund supports this critical work by helping offset the costs for First Nations to engage with the Province on Declaration Act implementation. The DAEF is flexible, and can support staffing, training, community-level meetings, and other resources required to enhance government-to-government work.

Objective 2.2: Negotiate and implement treaties and other constructive agreements with Indigenous Peoples

The Ministry works with Indigenous Peoples and other ministry partners to establish treaties and other agreements that affirm self-determination and support new approaches to developing a framework for cooperation and co-existence of First Nations jurisdiction.

Key Strategies

- In partnership with First Nations, implement new approaches to negotiations that result in long-term, enduring agreements that recognize and support reconciliation, self-determination, and economic independence.
- Collaborate with partner ministries to ensure that negotiated agreements are implemented in a timely and effective manner to deliver the intended outcomes and improve the quality of life in Indigenous communities, focusing on building more affordable housing, generating clean energy, creating good jobs, and protecting our environment.
- Continue to advance engagement with First Nations and other Indigenous Governing Bodies throughout the province on the development of decision-making agreements as outlined in the Declaration Act.
- In partnership with the Alliance of BC Modern Treaty Nations, continue to advance commitments identified in the [Shared Priorities Framework](#) to improve treaty implementation and relations across government.

- Establish processes to ensure local governments are notified and consulted during the negotiation of agreements, as reflected in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Province, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities on the Engagement with UBCM Local Governments on First Nations Negotiations and Other Initiatives with First Nations.
- Work with partner ministries to expand opportunities for engagement that advance the Province's relationship with Métis People in British Columbia.

Discussion

This Ministry continues its work to ensure that the negotiation and implementation of treaties, shared decision-making mechanisms, and other constructive arrangements uphold First Nations rights, including title, and support long-term, flexible agreements that can evolve over time.

As outlined in the Shared Priorities Framework, the Ministry and Alliance of BC Modern Treaty Nations continue to prioritize appropriate fiscal arrangements to fulfil treaty rights and obligations. This meaningful involvement of modern treaty nations in legislative and policy initiatives, and corresponding comprehensive organizational and policy changes advance a whole-of-government approach to treaty implementation.

The Declaration Act requires the B.C. government to work in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples to align provincial laws with the UN Declaration, develop and implement an action plan to meet the objectives of the UN Declaration, and deliver an annual report that details progress to implement the Declaration Act. Through delivery of its reporting commitment, the Ministry outlines, on an annual basis, measures towards implementing the Action Plan and alignment of laws.

Performance Measures

Reconciliation is a complex and enduring effort that is founded in the relationships that exist between governments. Measuring progress should reflect the evolution of these relationships and capture progress accurately, appropriately, and respectfully.

In recent years, the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation has undertaken development of new measures that capture these relationships and reflect nuances within them.

Performance Measure	2023/24 Baseline	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
[2a] First Nations or Indigenous Governing Bodies that have reached major milestones in negotiations.					
Other Constructive Agreement Negotiations (Tripartite) ¹	19	20	20	22	22
Other Constructive Agreement Negotiations (Bilateral) ²	30	25	24	26	28

Data source: Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

¹Includes tripartite Comprehensive Reconciliation Agreements (CRAs) and other constructive arrangements; excludes revenue sharing agreements as these are captured in the performance measure for Objective 1.2

²Includes bilateral Accommodation Tools, Economic Benefit Agreements, Settlement Agreements, G2G Agreements, and other constructive arrangements; excludes revenue sharing agreements as these are captured in the performance measure for Objective 1.2

Discussion

Treaties, agreements, and other constructive arrangements serve as a foundation for government-to-government relationships and are key to advancing reconciliation in the province. Guiding this work are policy and legislative tools designed to implement a transformed approach to negotiations that supports the pursuit of self-determination and the inherent right to self-government.

This measure is designed to report on incremental progress made by achieving milestones in specific treaties, agreements, and other constructive arrangements between the Province and First Nations or other Indigenous Governing Bodies. In the past, agreement reporting was based on completed agreements. In many cases, however, the agreements can take several years to negotiate. In the case of treaties, it is decades. Major milestones have been selected as a measure as they better demonstrate progress in negotiations. Milestones can vary between different types of agreements and may include receiving a negotiation mandate from Treasury Board, bringing a formal offer of lands and/or cash to a negotiation, formal acceptance of an offer by a First Nation, concluding an incremental agreement or concluding a full agreement. The intention is that the milestones are an indicator of substantial progress in a negotiation or implementation of key objectives of an existing agreement.

These performance measure targets are based on emerging trends from the current fiscal year forecast to the 2025/26 year forecast. The target remains relatively flat as the measure counts agreement negotiation milestones at a point in time. For example, new agreements will be counted when they are mandated, again when they are recommended to the principals³, again when they are signed, but then removed from the count the following year. These numbers will be non-cumulative, but the targets are intended to reflect that we are maintaining the current pace of negotiations.

Generating out-year targets is difficult due to the nature of negotiations and uncertain funding under the Negotiation Plan contingency fund. Out-year targets are based on shorter term trends and reflect conservative progress.

Performance Measure	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
[2b] First Nations within British Columbia exercising self-governance. ¹	10	11	14	16

¹This measure specifies the number of First Nations within British Columbia exercising self-government, either through a treaty or other negotiated agreement addressing governance, that enables the self-determined pursuit of cultural, social, economic, and other priorities of First Nations.

Discussion

Self-government is a substantial reconciliation outcome of treaties and other negotiated agreements that establish jurisdictional authority on matters of significance to each First Nation and enhance government-to-government relationships in accordance with the UN Declaration.

This measure specifies the number of First Nations within British Columbia exercising self-governance either through a treaty or other negotiated agreement addressing governance, that enables the self-determined pursuit of cultural, social, economic, and other priorities of First Nations. Targets show a moderate growth trend, as this measure is a cumulative count anticipated to increase slowly year-to-year and reflect moderate growth year-to-year as new agreements are signed and implemented.

³ 'principals' refers to the parties who can act on behalf of the Nation(s) to sign an agreement.

Financial Summary

(\$000s)	2024/25 Restated Estimates ¹	2025/26 Estimates	2026/27 Plan	2027/28 Plan
Operating Expenses				
Negotiations and Regional Operations Division	17,897	18,236	18,236	18,236
Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives Division	24,763	40,444	40,444	40,444
Reconciliation Transformation and Strategies Division	3,558	3,619	3,619	3,619
Executive and Support Services	12,784	12,835	12,835	12,835
Treaty and Other Agreements Funding	94,704	105,204	106,732	118,694
Declaration Act Secretariat	4,567	4,574	4,574	4,574
First Citizens Fund Special Account	1,823	2,046	2,209	2,209
Total	160,096	186,958	188,649	200,611
Capital Expenditures				
Executive and Support Services	3	3	3	3
Total	3	3	3	3
Other Financing Transactions				
British Columbia First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing Limited Partnership				
Disbursements	100,000	96,000	100,000	103,000
Receipts	(100,000)	(96,000)	(100,000)	(103,000)
Net Cash Requirements (Source)	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
Land Transfers				
Disbursements	43,867	30,000	30,000	30,000
Receipts	(0,000)	(0,000)	(0,000)	(0,000)
Net Cash Requirements (Source)	43,867	30,000	30,000	30,000
Total Disbursements	143,867	126,000	130,000	133,000
Total Receipts	(100,000)	(96,000)	(100,000)	(103,000)
Total Net Cash Requirements (Source)	43,867	30,000	30,000	30,000

¹ For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2024/25 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2025/26 *Estimates*. * Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the [Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates](#).

Appendix A: Declaration Act Secretariat

Purpose of the Organization

The Declaration Act Secretariat (DAS) is a central agency within the provincial government that works to coordinate and assist the cross-government effort to work in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples to align provincial laws with the UN Declaration as per section 3 of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act):

Measures to align laws with Declaration

"In consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous peoples in British Columbia, the government must take all measures necessary to ensure the laws of British Columbia are consistent with the Declaration."

Strategic Direction

The Declaration Act was unanimously passed by the Legislative Assembly in 2019. Section 3 of the Declaration Act requires the Province, in consultation and co-operation with Indigenous Peoples, to take "all measures necessary" to ensure consistency between the laws of British Columbia and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

Since 2019, the Province has taken some measures pursuant to section 3. The most significant measure was the formation of the Declaration Act Secretariat, established in Budget 2022. The mandate of the Secretariat is to ensure legislation is consistent with the UN Declaration and is developed in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, as required by Section 3 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

Reporting directly to the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, but distinct from the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, the Secretariat guides and assists ministries in meeting the alignment of laws obligations, collaborates within government on changes to government's legislative and policy processes, and helps establish government's legislative priorities related to alignment of laws.

The Secretariat's core functions are to:

- provide guidance on consultation and cooperation and consistency of laws;
- develop processes and measures to support alignment of laws;
- inform government's legislative agenda; and
- serve in an interlocutor role.

The Secretariat also provides guidance and advice on how to ensure required consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples takes place. Examples of relevant amendments include the Interpretation Act; Forest and Range Practices Act; FOIPPA; Emergency Program Act; Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Act; and development of the Anti-Racism Act. Additionally, through internal learning processes since the passage of the

Declaration Act, as well as work with Indigenous partners, the Secretariat co-developed guidance on “Interim Approach: Involving Indigenous Peoples in Policy and Legislation”.

Appendix B: Public Sector Organizations

As of March 2025, the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is responsible and accountable for the following:

BC Treaty Commission⁴

The BC Treaty Commission is an independent body responsible for facilitating treaty negotiations among First Nations and the governments of Canada and British Columbia.

First Peoples' Cultural Council

The First Peoples' Cultural Council is a First Nation-run Crown corporation that supports the revitalization of Indigenous languages, arts, culture, and heritage in British Columbia.

Haida Gwaii Management Council⁵

The Haida Gwaii Management Council is a strategic-level joint decision-making body for land and natural resource decisions on Haida Gwaii, as set out in the [Kunst'aa guu – Kunst'aayah Reconciliation Protocol](#).

Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women

The Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women provides advice to the Government of British Columbia on how to improve the quality of life of Indigenous women across B.C.

⁴ With reference to the BC Treaty Commission, responsibility and accountability is limited and defined through [the Treaty Commission Act](#).

⁵ With reference to the Haida Gwaii Management Council, responsibility and accountability is limited and defined through the [Kunst'aa guu – Kunst'aayah Reconciliation Protocol](#).

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

The mission of the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is to guide the Province of British Columbia's efforts towards true, lasting reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in British Columbia. The ministry works towards reconciliation with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples through the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and through treaties, agreements, partnerships, and other social and economic initiatives.

MINISTRY SUMMARY

(\$000)

	Estimates 2024/25 ¹	Estimates 2025/26
VOTED APPROPRIATIONS		
Vote 34 — Ministry Operations.....	59,002	75,134
Vote 35 — Treaty and Other Agreements Funding.....	94,704	105,204
Vote 36 — Declaration Act Secretariat.....	4,567	4,574
STATUTORY APPROPRIATION		
First Citizens Fund Special Account.....	1,823	2,046
OPERATING EXPENSES	<u>160,096</u>	<u>186,958</u>
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES ²	3	3
LOANS, INVESTMENTS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS ³	43,867	30,000
REVENUE COLLECTED FOR, AND TRANSFERRED TO, OTHER ENTITIES ⁴	—	—

NOTES

¹ For comparative purposes, figures shown for the 2024/25 operating expenses; capital expenditures; loans, investments and other requirements; and revenue collected for, and transferred to, other entities are restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2025/26 *Estimates*. A reconciliation of restated operating expenses and capital expenditures is presented in Schedule A.

² A listing of estimated capital expenditures by ministry is presented in Schedule C.

³ A summary of loans, investments and other requirements by ministry is presented in Schedule D.

⁴ A summary of revenue collected for, and transferred to, other entities by ministry is presented in Schedule E.

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

SUMMARY BY CORE BUSINESS

(\$000)

	2024/25	2025/26 ESTIMATES		
OPERATING EXPENSES	Net	Gross	External Recoveries	Net
Core Business				
Negotiations and Regional Operations Division.....	17,897	18,238	(2)	18,236
Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives Division.....	24,763	40,446	(2)	40,444
Reconciliation Transformation and Strategies Division.....	3,558	3,621	(2)	3,619
Executive and Support Services.....	12,784	12,837	(2)	12,835
Treaty and Other Agreements Funding.....	94,704	477,655	(372,451)	105,204
Declaration Act Secretariat.....	4,567	4,576	(2)	4,574
First Citizens Fund Special Account.....	1,823	2,046	—	2,046
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	160,096	559,419	(372,461)	186,958
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	Capital Expenditures	Capital Expenditures	Receipts and P3 Liabilities	Net
Core Business				
Executive and Support Services.....	3	3	—	3
TOTAL	3	3	—	3
LOANS, INVESTMENTS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS	Net	Disbursements	Receipts	Net
Core Business				
Treaty and Other Agreements Funding.....	43,867	30,000	—	30,000
TOTAL LOANS, INVESTMENTS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS	43,867	30,000	—	30,000
REVENUE COLLECTED FOR, AND TRANSFERRED TO, OTHER ENTITIES	Net	Disbursements	Receipts	Net
Core Business				
Treaty and Other Agreements Funding.....	—	96,000	(96,000)	—
TOTAL REVENUE COLLECTED FOR, AND TRANSFERRED TO, OTHER ENTITIES	—	96,000	(96,000)	—

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

VOTE DESCRIPTIONS

(\$000)

Estimates
2024/25

Estimates
2025/26

VOTE 34 — MINISTRY OPERATIONS

This vote provides for the programs, operations, and other activities described in the voted appropriations under the following core businesses: Negotiations and Regional Operations Division, Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives Division, Reconciliation Transformation and Strategies Division, and Executive and Support Services.

NEGOTIATIONS AND REGIONAL OPERATIONS DIVISION

Voted Appropriation

Negotiations and Regional Operations Division.....	17,897	<u>18,236</u>
--	--------	---------------

Voted Appropriation Description: This sub-vote provides for the leadership of government's role in building new, lasting, and transformative relationships with Indigenous Peoples through the negotiation and implementation of treaties, incremental treaty agreements, comprehensive reconciliation agreements, revenue-sharing agreements, and other agreements with First Nations, Indigenous Peoples and organizations, and the federal government. In addition, this sub-vote supports negotiation policy development, including emerging policy directives that strive to achieve rights, recognition, and reconciliation outcomes. This sub-vote also provides for cross-government coordination of engagements with First Nations and Indigenous Peoples, including development of government-to-government resource management protocols, cross-government coordination of First Nations and Indigenous Peoples consultation and accommodation, and treaty implementation and treaty-related measures. This sub-vote also provides for ongoing engagement with local governments and regional districts regarding negotiations, agreement implementation, and relationship building priorities with Indigenous communities in regions across the province. This sub-vote also provides for the operation of Victoria-based and regional offices that execute negotiations, agreement implementation, operations, and relationship management approaches. Regional offices support agencies across government at the regional level to coordinate engagements with First Nations and Indigenous Peoples, including providing day-to-day advice on relationships with First Nations and Indigenous Peoples, negotiation mandate development, negotiation leadership and support, and implementation to ensure that provincial government obligations are met. Costs may be recovered from ministries, other entities within government, and parties external to government for activities described within this sub-vote.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND INITIATIVES DIVISION

Voted Appropriation

Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives Division.....	24,763	<u>40,444</u>
--	--------	---------------

Voted Appropriation Description: This sub-vote provides for the support and enhancement of the government's approach to reconciliation with First Nations and Indigenous Peoples through negotiations both inside and outside the treaty process considered strategically important to furthering the socio-cultural and socio-economic priorities of government. This sub-vote also provides for leadership of government's negotiations with the federal government to cost-share treaties, incremental treaty agreements, comprehensive reconciliation agreements, and other arrangements. This sub-vote also supports community support and emergency management; provides for activities supporting the closing and bringing into effect of agreements with First Nations, such as the development of legislation and the closing and implementation of agreements under the British Columbia Treaty Commission process; supports other agencies across government to implement treaties and other agreements and ensure provincial obligations within treaties and other agreements are addressed; and facilitates engagement and negotiation among First Nations, Indigenous communities and organizations, provincial ministries, and key stakeholders with the aim of accommodating First Nation and Indigenous interests and promoting collaboration and coordination on Indigenous issues across sectors and orders of government. This sub-vote also provides for initiatives to address the socio-economic gaps between Indigenous Peoples and other British Columbians, including the identification of opportunities, removal of barriers, cross-ministry coordination of resources and services provided to Indigenous Peoples, and support for data development and reporting out on progress. This sub-vote also provides for leadership in fiscal policy development, tripartite fiscal negotiations (including revenue-sharing agreements with First Nations), and development of financial and specific mandates for treaty negotiations. This sub-vote also provides support for strategic and operational management of funding to support reconciliation initiatives and negotiations, including the First Citizens Fund, the Long-Term BC First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing and Financial Agreement, and related transfers. This sub-vote also supports relationship building, cultural initiatives, community development and innovation, and support to Indigenous leadership and advisory bodies. This sub-vote also provides support for the policy development of a new fiscal framework and resource revenue-sharing with Indigenous Peoples in British Columbia. Costs may be recovered from ministries, other entities within government, and parties external to government for activities described within this sub-vote.

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

VOTE DESCRIPTIONS

(\$000)

	Estimates 2024/25	Estimates 2025/26
RECONCILIATION TRANSFORMATION AND STRATEGIES DIVISION		
Voted Appropriation		
Reconciliation Transformation and Strategies Division.....	3,558	3,619
Voted Appropriation Description: This sub-vote provides for work across government to guide the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration), and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, and to support the implementation of the Tsilhqot'in Supreme Court Decision and learnings from other relevant case law. This sub-vote provides for the identification and pursuit of key cross-government linkages to support alignment, collaboration and implementation of the UN Declaration, including the development of strategic policy tools and resources for the public service. This sub-vote also provides for the implementation of the <i>Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act</i>, and provides for the engagement processes towards, and the development of, the government's reconciliation vision and leadership of the necessary transformation associated with this vision. This sub-vote also provides for collaboration with the federal government and Indigenous governments and organizations; and working with internal and external partners and stakeholders to identify and help drive economic growth and opportunities. This sub-vote provides for strategic advice and coordination to help drive economic growth and opportunities in Indigenous communities that support meaningful advancement of self-determination outcomes. This sub-vote provides for development, cross-ministry coordination, implementation, and monitoring of Indigenous, external stakeholder, and intergovernmental engagement. Costs may be recovered from ministries, other entities within government, and parties external to government for activities described within this sub-vote.		
EXECUTIVE AND SUPPORT SERVICES		
Voted Appropriations		
Minister's Office.....	871	843
Corporate Services.....	11,913	11,992
	12,784	12,835
VOTE 34 — MINISTRY OPERATIONS	59,002	75,134

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

VOTE DESCRIPTIONS

(\$000)

	Estimates 2024/25	Estimates 2025/26
VOTE 35 — TREATY AND OTHER AGREEMENTS FUNDING		
This vote provides for the programs, operations, and other activities described in the voted appropriations under the following core business: Treaty and Other Agreements Funding.		
TREATY AND OTHER AGREEMENTS FUNDING		
Voted Appropriations		
Treaty and Other Agreements Funding.....	4,242	10,608
Non Treaty Funding.....	90,462	94,596
	<u>94,704</u>	<u>105,204</u>
Voted Appropriations Description: This sub-vote provides for transfers and costs to First Nations, Indigenous Peoples and organizations, and third parties as a result of the settlement of treaties, incremental treaty agreements, economic benefit agreements, forest consultation and revenue-sharing agreements, and other agreements, including as a result of the federal/provincial agreement as specified under the <i>Fort Nelson Indian Reserve Minerals Revenue Sharing Act</i> . This sub-vote also provides for costs associated with acquisition, administration, and disposal of land and other assets as a result of the settlement of treaties, incremental treaties, and other agreements. Costs may be recovered from revenue received from stumpage, petroleum, natural gas, and minerals extraction or other sources. Costs may also be recovered from ministries, other entities within government, and parties external to government for transfers described within this sub-vote.		
VOTE 35 — TREATY AND OTHER AGREEMENTS FUNDING	94,704	105,204

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

VOTE DESCRIPTIONS
(\$000)

Estimates 2024/25	Estimates 2025/26
----------------------	----------------------

VOTE 36 — DECLARATION ACT SECRETARIAT

This vote provides for the programs, operations, and other activities described in the voted appropriation under the following core business: Declaration Act Secretariat.

DECLARATION ACT SECRETARIAT

Voted Appropriation

Declaration Act Secretariat.....	4,567	4,574
----------------------------------	-------	-------

Voted Appropriation Description: This sub-vote provides for the operations of the Declaration Act Secretariat, including the facilitation, coordination, and guidance to meet the alignment of laws obligations under the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act), including policy and legislative process reform and guidance to government on ensuring that measures align with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are taken in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples. In addition, this sub-vote provides for engagement with Indigenous Peoples to implement the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and align laws with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to do so in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples. This sub-vote provides for executive support, including executive services, delivering planning and support focused on major government initiatives and corporate administration. This sub-vote also provides for the Secretariat's strategic, service, and internal communications planning efforts; and business plans and performance monitoring, measurement, and reporting. This sub-vote also provides for finance, administrative, human resources, and information management services and systems; and information and privacy. Costs may be recovered from ministries, other entities within government, and parties external to government for activities described within this sub-vote.

VOTE 36 — DECLARATION ACT SECRETARIAT	4,567	4,574
---------------------------------------	-------	-------

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

STATUTORY DESCRIPTIONS

(\$000)

Estimates
2024/25Estimates
2025/26

STATUTORY APPROPRIATIONS

This statutory appropriation provides for the programs, operations, and other activities of the following special account: First Citizens Fund.

FIRST CITIZENS FUND

Statutory Appropriation

First Citizens Fund.....	1,823	2,046
--------------------------	-------	-------

Statutory Appropriation Description: This statutory appropriation provides for the First Citizens Fund which is governed under the *Special Accounts Appropriation and Control Act*.

MINISTRY GROUP ACCOUNT CLASSIFICATION SUMMARY

GROUP ACCOUNT CLASSIFICATION

Salaries and Benefits	35,108	35,704
Operating Costs	9,562	9,590
Government Transfers	491,040	511,338
Other Expenses	2,943	2,943
Internal Recoveries	(156)	(156)
External Recoveries	(378,401)	(372,461)
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES.....	160,096	186,958

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

SPECIAL ACCOUNTS¹

(\$000)

	Estimates 2024/25	Estimates 2025/26
FIRST CITIZENS FUND		
This account was originally created as a fund under the <i>Revenue Surplus Appropriation Act</i> in 1969, was continued under the <i>Funds Control Act</i> in 1979, and was changed to a special account under the <i>Special Accounts Appropriation and Control Act</i> in 1988. The endowment fund has a restricted balance of \$66.5 million which is not permitted to be spent. The account promotes the economic, educational, and cultural well-being of Indigenous Peoples who are normally residents of British Columbia by providing financial assistance through loan guarantees and government transfers. Interest attributable to the account balance is credited to the account as revenue. Expenses consist of government transfers in support of cultural, educational, and economic opportunities. The account also provides funds for the administration costs of certain social and economic development programs. No financing transactions are provided for under this account.		
SPENDING AUTHORITY AVAILABLE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FISCAL YEAR ².....	964	964
OPERATING TRANSACTIONS		
Revenue.....	1,823	2,046
Expense.....	(1,823)	(2,046)
Net Revenue (Expense).....	—	—
FINANCING TRANSACTIONS		
Receipts.....	—	—
Disbursements.....	—	—
Capital Expenditures.....	—	—
Net Cash Source (Requirement).....	—	—
PROJECTED SPENDING AUTHORITY AVAILABLE AT THE END OF THE FISCAL YEAR ².....	964	964

NOTES

¹ A Special Account is an account in the General Fund where the authorization to spend money from the account is located in an Act other than the *Supply Act*.

² The Spending Authority Available at the Beginning of the Fiscal Year 2024/25 is based on the 2023/24 *Public Accounts*. The Projected Spending Authority Available at the End of the Fiscal Year represents the cash and temporary investments projected to be available at the end of each fiscal year.

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

LOANS, INVESTMENTS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS BY CORE BUSINESS
(\$000)

	Estimates 2024/25	Estimates 2025/26
TREATY AND OTHER AGREEMENTS FUNDING		
LAND TRANSFERS — Disbursements represent expenditures for acquisition, administration, and disposal of land and other assets as a result of the settlement of treaties, incremental treaties, and other agreements. Negotiation and implementation costs are funded through the ministry's voted appropriations.		
Disbursements.....	43,867	30,000
Receipts.....	—	—
Net Cash Requirement (Source).....	43,867	30,000

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

REVENUE COLLECTED FOR, AND TRANSFERRED TO, OTHER ENTITIES BY CORE BUSINESS
(\$000)

	Estimates 2024/25	Estimates 2025/26
--	----------------------	----------------------

TREATY AND OTHER AGREEMENTS FUNDING

BRITISH COLUMBIA FIRST NATIONS GAMING REVENUE SHARING LIMITED PARTNERSHIP — Disbursements are made by the Province to the British Columbia First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing Limited Partnership (Partnership) or to a limited partner of the Partnership at the written request of the Partnership in accordance with the *Gaming Control Act*, further supported by the Long-Term BC First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing and Financial Agreement in respect of a portion of the actual net income (receipts) of the British Columbia Lottery Corporation collected on behalf of the Partnership under the *Gaming Control Act*. Administration costs are funded through the ministry's voted appropriations.

Disbursements.....	100,000	96,000
Receipts.....	(100,000)	(96,000)
Net Cash Requirement (Source).....	—	—

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

(\$000)

VOTE 34 Ministry Operations

Description	Total 2024/25 Operating Expenses	50	51	52	54	Total Salaries and Benefits	55	57	59	60	63	65	67	68	69
Negotiations and Regional Operations Division	17,897	13,118	65	3,332	—	16,515	—	738	—	590	77	301	—	—	—
Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives Division	24,763	7,276	—	1,848	—	9,124	—	279	—	900	23	60	—	—	—
Reconciliation Transformation and Strategies Division	3,558	2,410	—	612	—	3,022	—	54	—	23	8	15	—	—	—
Executive and Support Services	12,784	3,353	—	876	60	4,289	35	185	3,052	364	174	536	—	—	1
Minister's Office	871	491	—	149	60	700	—	113	—	—	10	20	—	—	—
Corporate Services	11,913	2,862	—	727	—	3,589	35	72	3,052	364	164	516	—	—	1
Total	59,002	26,157	65	6,668	60	32,950	35	1,256	3,052	1,877	282	912	—	—	1

VOTE 35 Treaty and Other Agreements Funding

Description	Total 2024/25 Operating Expenses	50	51	52	54	Total Salaries and Benefits	55	57	59	60	63	65	67	68	69
Treaty and Other Agreements Funding	94,704	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Treaty and Other Agreements Funding	4,242	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Non Treaty Funding	90,462	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	94,704	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

VOTE 36 Declaration Act Secretariat

Description	Total 2024/25 Operating Expenses	50	51	52	54	Total Salaries and Benefits	55	57	59	60	63	65	67	68	69
Declaration Act Secretariat	4,567	2,197	—	557	—	2,754	—	280	300	253	33	147	—	—	—
Total	4,567	2,197	—	557	—	2,754	—	280	300	253	33	147	—	—	—

Statutory Appropriations

Description	Total 2024/25 Operating Expenses	50	51	52	54	Total Salaries and Benefits	55	57	59	60	63	65	67	68	69
First Citizens Fund	1,823	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	1,823	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

70	72	73	75	Total Operating Costs	77	79	80	Total Govt Transfers	81	83	85	Total Other Expenses	86	88	Total Internal Recoveries	89	90	Total External Recoveries	Total 2025/26 Operating Expenses
—	—	—	1	1,707	—	—	—	—	—	—	17	17	—	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(2)	18,236
—	—	—	—	1,262	275	—	29,921	30,196	—	—	15	15	—	(151)	(151)	(1)	(1)	(2)	40,444
—	—	—	—	100	500	—	—	500	—	—	—	—	—	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(2)	3,619
—	—	238	583	5,168	—	—	940	940	—	—	2,441	2,441	—	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(2)	12,835
—	—	—	—	143	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	843
—	—	238	583	5,025	—	—	940	940	—	—	2,441	2,441	—	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(2)	11,992
—	—	238	584	8,237	775	—	30,861	31,636	—	—	2,473	2,473	—	(154)	(154)	(4)	(4)	(8)	75,134

70	72	73	75	Total Operating Costs	77	79	80	Total Govt Transfers	81	83	85	Total Other Expenses	86	88	Total Internal Recoveries	89	90	Total External Recoveries	Total 2025/26 Operating Expenses
—	—	—	—	—	372,450	—	105,206	477,656	—	—	—	—	—	(1)	(1)	(1)	(372,450)	(372,451)	105,204
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10,610	10,610	—	—	—	—	—	(1)	(1)	(1)	—	(1)	10,608
—	—	—	—	—	372,450	—	94,596	467,046	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(372,450)	(372,450)	94,596
—	—	—	—	—	372,450	—	105,206	477,656	—	—	—	—	—	(1)	(1)	(1)	(372,450)	(372,451)	105,204

70	72	73	75	Total Operating Costs	77	79	80	Total Govt Transfers	81	83	85	Total Other Expenses	86	88	Total Internal Recoveries	89	90	Total External Recoveries	Total 2025/26 Operating Expenses
—	—	130	210	1,353	—	—	—	—	—	—	470	470	—	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(2)	4,574
—	—	130	210	1,353	—	—	—	—	—	—	470	470	—	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(2)	4,574

70	72	73	75	Total Operating Costs	77	79	80	Total Govt Transfers	81	83	85	Total Other Expenses	86	88	Total Internal Recoveries	89	90	Total External Recoveries	Total 2025/26 Operating Expenses
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,046	2,046	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,046
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,046	2,046	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,046



January 16, 2025

Honourable Christine Boyle
Minister of Indigenous Relations
and Reconciliation
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Boyle:

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation at a critical time for our province. Serving as a member of the executive council is a privilege and responsibility which I am confident you will fulfill with integrity and a commitment to the people of our province.

British Columbians have trusted us with a mandate to deliver for them in ways that make a tangible difference in their daily lives. They expect us to listen and learn from people of different perspectives – and work together to make things better for everyone.

Specifically, we will tackle the challenges people worry about at the kitchen table:

- **Grow the economy by creating good jobs across British Columbia.** We will collaborate with businesses, workers, and communities to attract investments in both new and traditional sectors as well as emerging sectors of the economy. This approach will bring certainty for business, security for workers, and generate the wealth needed to support the essential services British Columbians rely on.
- **Reduce costs for families** including by helping people access homes they can afford through support for first-time homebuyers, increasing the supply of rental housing stock, and stronger measures to crack down on housing speculation.

.../2

**Office of the
Premier**

Web Site:
www.gov.bc.ca

Mailing Address:
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E1

Location:
Parliament Buildings
Victoria

- **Strengthen health care** by expanding access to family doctors and recruiting and training more health professionals, ensuring that every British Columbian can access the care they need, no matter where they live. We will also increase access to addictions treatment and provide help for people whose struggles require intensive supports.
- **Make our neighbourhoods and communities safer** by working with law enforcement and social agencies to address street disorder, crack down on organized crime, and do all we can to ensure repeat offenders stay behind bars.

Our commitment to take action on climate change remains foundational and will be key to a healthy and prosperous BC for future generations.

Underlying all this work is our partnership with Indigenous peoples. Advancing reconciliation, implementing the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and working in partnership with First Nations rights-holders to advance shared interests is the responsibility of every Minister.

Over this mandate I expect you to prioritize making progress on the following:

- In order to protect key services that British Columbians rely on, work with the Minister of Finance to review all existing ministry programs and initiatives to ensure programs remain relevant, are efficient, grow the economy, and deliver an improved quality of life for Indigenous peoples in the province. This is important in the context of current Provincial budget constraints and overall efficiency.
- Build partnerships that advance reconciliation in measurable ways and create tangible benefits for First Nations and all British Columbians, such as building more affordable housing, generating clean energy, creating good jobs, and protecting our environment.
- Ensure that at the end of four years, people living in Indigenous communities in the province have seen an improvement in their quality of life through our government's interventions by prioritizing initiatives that make a meaningful difference in the lives of Indigenous peoples in this province.
- Continue work with First Nations partners, local governments, and agencies to implement treaties and other agreements.
- Given the strains of conflict over boundaries, and the legal costs and uncertainty associated with unclear boundaries, work with First Nations partners to prioritize Action 1.1 of the *Declaration Act Action Plan* relating to overlap and boundary dispute resolution.

- Through the Declaration Act Secretariat, lead work with the Attorney General to ensure alignment of BC's laws with the rights of Indigenous peoples.
- Lead work to review and update the *Declaration Act Action Plan* by 2027, for the next five-year period.
- Work with the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives on anti-Indigenous racism.
- In cooperation with the Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, continue to develop and implement approaches to accelerate agreed-upon land transfers that enhance First Nation community and economic development.

As you are aware, we have established an accord with the BC Green Caucus that supports our shared commitment to ensuring stable governance focused on delivering progress and tangible outcomes for British Columbians. The commitments in that accord complement the direction in these mandate letters.

As a Cabinet, we will uphold the highest standards of ethics, collaboration, and good conduct in service of the public, and as a Minister of the Crown, you are expected to review, understand, and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act*. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your Deputy Minister and the public servants under their direction, who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. Your Minister's Office must meet the highest standards for integrity and provide a respectful, rewarding environment for all staff.

The work we have ahead takes place in a profoundly challenging geopolitical environment. Close friends and neighbours to our south are contemplating imposing draconian tariffs on our products that would hurt both Americans and Canadians. Our allies internationally face governmental instability. Hate and racism are on the rise around the world. Artificial intelligence breakthroughs with unclear implications and astonishing potential are announced daily. Global inflation, snarled supply chains, and war are threatening global economic growth and prosperity as well as the transition to a low-carbon economy.

We have an obligation to protect and defend British Columbians, as well as seize opportunities, in these uncertain times.

The good news is that we have everything we need to succeed, and we will succeed. British Columbia's people – our workers, entrepreneurs, business leaders, artists, and innovators – are among the most talented in the world. We are home to world-class educational institutions and public services. Our natural beauty is unmatched, we have internationally envied resources, and we are one of the most diverse places on the planet. Your job is to help us leverage these advantages in perilous times.

.../4

Use this mandate letter to guide your work, and do not be afraid to challenge assumptions, or be innovative, bold and aggressive in achieving the goals set out for you and your Ministry by the people of this province.

Thank you for joining me in the work ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Eby", followed by a long horizontal flourish line extending to the right.

David Eby, KC
Premier

KEY MESSAGES: *Reconciliation Accomplishments*

General

- Together with First Nations – and all British Columbians – we’re building a stronger B.C. through partnerships and agreements that create economic opportunities, good jobs, and help build a better future for all.
- B.C. and First Nations have done a tremendous amount of work together since the NDP formed government seven years ago:
 - passing the **Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act** – putting Indigenous rights in common law, and
 - developing **an action plan** that is producing changes on the ground for Indigenous Peoples.
- While some argue we should return to decades-long court cases and conflict, the **path of partnership** – working together with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, local and federal governments, organizations, and businesses – is the route to a better future.
- We are working shoulder-to-shoulder with Indigenous Peoples on partnerships that support healthy communities, economic opportunity, services that make life easier, and sustainable stewardship of the land, water and resources:
 - co-operation and **investment in housing, infrastructure, and community safety**,
 - developing new ways to move projects forward in **partnership, especially related to the sustainable development of natural resources**,
 - **ending Indigenous-specific racism** and **encouraging cultural wellbeing** and,
 - **supporting economic development** and **good jobs**.
- Reconciliation is a rising tide that lift all boats. It creates certainty, opportunity and prosperity for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike.
- Tremendous efforts are being made across all governments and partners to put our collective words into action in our communities.
- Through collaborating and co-operating with Indigenous Peoples, we are taking thoughtful action on reconciliation:
 - Restoring Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services.
 - Changing the way First Nations can acquire, hold and register fee simple land in B.C., reducing discriminatory and racist barriers.
 - Implementing a new graduation requirement to ensure all students complete Indigenous-focused coursework before they graduate from the B.C. education system.
 - Recognizing the importance of First Nations post-secondary institutes with funding to support the revitalization of First Nations languages and cultures and to provide quality education to First Nations learners.
 - Building unique partnerships encourages investment and improves the services and infrastructure we all rely on.

Examples

- Together with Indigenous Peoples, we are developing new and historic agreements, while successfully implementing existing agreements:
 - **Key land transfer agreements** with First Nations support the return of culturally and spiritually significant lands to Nations and economic development opportunities. Recent land transfers include Snuneymuxw First Nation, Lyackson First Nation and Cowichan Tribes, Treaty 8 Nations, Lake Babine Nation and Tsq̓ésceñ First Nation.
 - The historic **Gaayhlxid • Gíihlagalgang “Rising Tide” Haida Title Lands Agreement**, to recognizes the Haida Nation’s Aboriginal title throughout Haida Gwaii. This agreement provides stability and clarity in key areas, while setting out the work we will do together in the years ahead. And it avoids the confusion and unpredictability from leaving these issues for the courts to decide.
 - Advancing agreements under **section 7** of the Declaration Act to share decision-making with First Nations. Two consent-based agreements have been signed with the Tahltan Central Government for the Eskay Creek and the Red Chris mines. We are also in negotiations for another agreement with Tahltan on the Galore Creek mine. ‘Namgis First Nation and the Province are also working on a section 7 agreement to support forest stewardship and sustainable forestry operations.
- We are fundamentally shifting our approach to how we both develop and implement provincial laws, which is resulting in an increasing number of legislative reforms. Acts that...
 - support Indigenous Peoples in exercising their **jurisdiction over child and family services** (
 - upheld First Nations **jurisdiction over education**, which includes enabling First Nations to certify and regulate teachers in their own schools
 - added a non-derogation clause to the Interpretation Act, which makes it clear that provincial laws uphold, and do not diminish, the **rights of Indigenous Peoples** as outlined under Section 35 of the Constitution Act
 - added Indigenous identity as a protected ground under the **B.C. Human Rights Code**, which will help us all combat racism and protect Indigenous Peoples from discrimination
- We are proud to be working together with Indigenous non-profit housing providers, First Nations, and other Indigenous organizations to create new affordable and culturally appropriate homes that help to address housing needs in local communities. B.C. is the first province in Canada to invest provincial funds into on-reserve housing – a federal jurisdiction.
 - Through the Indigenous Housing Fund and other provincial programs, **almost 3,250 homes for Indigenous Peoples are open or underway** in communities in British Columbia, with more on the way.
 - We’ve also partnered with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations on an innovative initiative that will help **thousands of first-time home buyers get into the market**.
- In partnership with the BC First Nations Justice Council, the Province has now fulfilled a commitment to establish **15 Indigenous Justice Centres** in communities throughout B.C.
- We have also supported the completion of eight **First Nations-run mental health and addictions treatment centres** throughout the province – to continue support for Indigenous-led treatment, recovery and aftercare services.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Ministry of Indigenous Relations &
Reconciliation and Declaration Act Secretariat
Date: February 14, 2025
Minister Responsible: Hon. Christine Boyle

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act

Key Messages:

- **B.C. is the first jurisdiction in Canada to pass legislation to adopt the internationally recognized standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration).**
- **These are the “minimum standards for the survival, dignity, and well-being of Indigenous Peoples”.**
- **The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act) passed unanimously in the B.C. legislature on November 26, 2019 and came into force three days later.**
- **The Declaration Act creates a path forward to respecting the human rights of Indigenous Peoples, while introducing better transparency, predictability and accountability in Indigenous–provincial relationships.**
- **The Declaration Act mandates government, in consultation and co-operation with Indigenous Peoples, to bring provincial laws into alignment with the UN Declaration, to develop and implement an action plan to achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration and to report annually on progress.**

Section 3 (alignment of laws) & Declaration Act Secretariat

(See DAS INs for additional information on the Secretariat)

- **Through section 3, the Declaration Act mandates government to bring provincial laws into alignment with the UN Declaration, and to do so in consultation and co-operation with Indigenous Peoples.**
- **Established in 2022, the Declaration Act Secretariat is a central agency that guides and assists every government ministry to ensure provincial laws align with the UN Declaration and are developed in consultation and co-operation with Indigenous Peoples.**
- **In October 2022, the Secretariat released the ‘Interim Approach to Implement the Requirements of Section 3 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act’.**

- The interim guidance approach provides government a clear, transparent processes for how they are to work together with Indigenous Peoples in developing provincial laws, policies and practices.
- A number of acts have already been amended to align with the UN Declaration. For example, amendments that:
 - support Indigenous Peoples in exercising their jurisdiction over child and family services (through the Child, Family and Community Service Act)
 - strengthen consultation, co-operation and consent on adoption placements for Indigenous children (through the Adoption Act)
 - upheld First Nations jurisdiction over education, including enabling First Nations to certify and regulate teachers in their own schools
 - added a non-derogation clause to the Interpretation Act, which makes it clear that provincial laws uphold, and do not diminish, the rights of Indigenous Peoples as outlined under Section 35 of the Constitution Act
 - added Indigenous identity as a protected ground under the B.C. Human Rights Code, which will help us all to combat anti-Indigenous racism and protect Indigenous Peoples from discrimination
 - taken a significant step to dismantle systemic racism and discrimination faced by Indigenous, Black and people of colour through the Anti-racism Data Act
 - recognize Indigenous People's inherent rights to self government as it relates to emergency management through the Emergency and Disaster Management Act

Section 4 (Action Plan)

- Section 4 of the Declaration Act requires the Province to develop and implement an action plan to achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration, in consultation and co-operation with Indigenous Peoples.
- The Province's Declaration Act Action Plan was released on March 30, 2022, as a five-year (2022-2027), cross-government plan to support the UN Declaration in B.C.
- The action plan includes 89 tangible, achievable cross-government actions in the areas of self-determination and self-government, rights and title, ending anti-Indigenous racism, and enhancing social, cultural and economic well-being.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

- The action plan was developed through two years of intensive engagement, helping to ensure it reflects the priorities of Indigenous Peoples in B.C.
- Each ministry in government works in consultation and co-operation with Indigenous Peoples to deliver on their specific actions.

If asked about supports for First Nations participation:

- The Declaration Act Engagement Fund was launched in May 2023 to enhance First Nations' capacity to engage with the Province on implementation of the action plan and aligning provincial legislation with the UN Declaration.
- The one-time \$200-million fund is administered by the New Relationship Trust.

Section 5 (annual reports)

- Section 5 of the Declaration Act requires regular reporting to the B.C. legislature to monitor progress on the alignment of laws and the action plan, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples.
- It includes tabling an annual report by June 30th each year.
- Available on the Declaration Act website, the 2023-24 Annual Report details progress made on 60 actions either underway or completed in the first two years of the Declaration Act Action Plan, as well as work to align provincial laws.
- This includes housing and infrastructure, economic development and job creation and new ways of achieving certainty, especially related to the sustainable development of natural resources.
- More will follow this year as work continues, in consultation and co-operation with Indigenous Peoples.

Sections 6&7 (decision-making agreements)

- Sections 6 and 7 of the Declaration Act provides mechanisms for the negotiation of joint and consent-based decision-making agreements with Indigenous governing bodies.
- B.C. has signed of two consent-based agreements with the Tahltan [tall-tan] Central Government under section 7 of the Declaration Act for the Eskay Creek and the Red Chris mines.
- These agreements also operate under section 7 of the Environmental Assessment Act.

- **Over the past two years, B.C. announced mandates to negotiate a joint and consent-based decision agreements the Tahltan [tall-tan] Nation, and 'Namgis [nhum-geez] First Nation.**

KEY FACTS:

The Declaration Act passed unanimously in the B.C. legislature on Nov. 26, 2019, received Royal Assent on Nov. 28, 2019, and came into force on Nov. 29, 2019. B.C. is the first jurisdiction in Canada to have passed legislation to implement the UN Declaration.

B.C. worked with the First Nations Leadership Council to develop the legislation. Such collaboration on legislation was unprecedented in Canada at the time. A commitment to the legislation was outlined in the 2018 Concrete Actions document.

Declaration Act overview

- The legislation:
 - **Provides a legislative framework** for recognizing the constitutional and human rights of Indigenous Peoples.
 - **Mandates government to bring provincial laws into alignment with the Declaration** in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples.
 - **Requires the Province's action plan** to achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration, which must be developed and implemented in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples.
 - **Requires regular reporting to the legislature** to monitor progress on the alignment of laws and the action plan, including tabling an annual report by June 30th, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples.
 - **Allows for flexibility** for the Province to enter into agreements with a broad range of Indigenous governing bodies – this could include Indigenous governments outside of Indian Act Bands and incorporated organizations such as multiple nations working together as a collective, or hereditary governments and treaty nations.
 - **Provides a framework** for joint and consent-based decision-making with Indigenous governing bodies – providing structure and processes for how joint decision-making could happen, while ensuring administrative fairness and transparency.

On June 21, 2021, Canada's bill - the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act - received Royal Assent and immediately came into force. The Northwest Territories became the second jurisdiction in Canada to put the UN Declaration in law in October 2023. The City of Vancouver also has an UN strategy and action plan that was released June 25, 2024.

Communications Director responsible: Leanne Ritchie
 Responsible program: ADMs Ann Marie Sam / Priscilla Sabbas-Watts
 Prepared by: Kim Hudson

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION
DECLARATION ACT SECRETARIAT
2025 Estimates Note

Alignment of Laws

SPEAKING POINTS

- Since the passing of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act) in 2019, government has made progress on the alignment of provincial legislation with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration).
- The Declaration Act Secretariat was established in 2022 as a dedicated body to guide and assist B.C. in its obligations to ensure legislation, policy, and practice are consistent with the UN Declaration.
- The Secretariat supports a consistent approach to the alignment of laws through direct ministry support at each stage of policy and legislative development. Alignment of laws is a cross-government effort.
- The Secretariat also helps to ensure that legislation is developed in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples and is consistent with the UN Declaration, as required by Section 3 of the Declaration Act.
- Each ministry is responsible for ensuring proper consultation and cooperation with rights holders, engagement with other levels of government (federal and municipal), communities, businesses and other interest holders.
- There is work to be done to support the public's understanding of the Declaration Act and Section 3 of the Act, which mandates B.C. to bring provincial laws into alignment with the UN Declaration. Ongoing work is required by all ministries to help increase the understanding of this work and its benefits to Indigenous Peoples and all British Columbians.

BACKGROUND

- The Declaration Act was unanimously passed by the Legislative Assembly in 2019. The obligations of Section 3 of the Declaration Act are an essential pathway for recognizing and implementing title and rights, including treaty rights, and for the survival, dignity and well-being of Indigenous peoples as protected under section 35(1) of the *Constitution Act*, 1982.
- The Secretariat was established in Budget 2022. The mandate of the Secretariat is to help advance section 3. Its core functions are to
 - Provide guidance on consultation and cooperation and consistency of laws.
 - Develop processes and measures to support alignment of laws.
 - Inform government's legislative agenda.
 - Serve in an interlocutor role.

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION
DECLARATION ACT SECRETARIAT
2025 Estimates Note

- The Secretariat has been actively involved in supporting the Province to pass priority legislation. Examples of recent, relevant amendments include the
 - *Anti-Racism Act* (Bill 23, Spring 2024)
 - *Child, Family and Community Service Amendment Act* (Bill 5, Spring 2024)
 - *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* (Bill 31, Fall 2023)
 - *School Amendment Act* (Bill 40, Fall 2023)
 - *Health Professions & Occupations Act* (Bill 36, Fall 2022)
 - *Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendment Act* (Bill 38, Fall 2022)

Primary Contact

Priscilla Sabbas-Watts

Legislative Transformation and Engagement

Cell: Government

ADM Responsible

Priscilla Sabbas-Watts

Legislative Transformation and Engagement

Cell: Government

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION
DECLARATION ACT SECRETARIAT
2025 Estimates Note

Consultation and Cooperation / The Interim Approach

SPEAKING POINTS

- **Consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples is a central part of the cross-government work to embed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into B.C.'s laws, policies, programs, and practices.**
- **Since 2022, the Interim Approach has been used to provide government and sectors with clear guidance on how they are to work with Indigenous Peoples. This work is ongoing.**
- **We've heard feedback on some of the challenges experienced in undertaking consultation and cooperation from partners and ministry staff.**
- **We understand the public service needs support to undertake consultation and cooperation in a good way, and this is why we're working to create additional guidance that will be supplementary to the Interim Approach.**
- **Creating additional consultation and cooperation guidance will help government meet the legislative priorities of Indigenous partners, so we can be more responsive to the needs of Indigenous Peoples.**

BACKGROUND

- The Declaration Act was unanimously passed by the Legislative Assembly in 2019. Section 3 of the Declaration Act requires the Province, "in consultation and co-operation with Indigenous peoples", to take all measures necessary to ensure consistency between the laws of British Columbia and the UN Declaration.
- Since 2019, the Province has taken measures pursuant to section 3. The most significant measure was the formation of the Declaration Act Secretariat, established in Budget 2022. The mandate of the Secretariat is to help advance section 3.
- Core functions of the Secretariat are to
 - Provide guidance on consultation and cooperation and consistency of laws.
 - Develop processes and measures to support alignment of laws.
 - Inform government's legislative agenda.
 - Serve in an interlocutor role.
- In October 2022, the Province publicly released the Interim Approach to Implementing the Requirements of Section 3 of the Declaration Act (Interim Approach) which provided every ministry and sector of government with clear, transparent processes for how they are to work together with Indigenous Peoples

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

DECLARATION ACT SECRETARIAT

2025 Estimates Note

in developing legislation and policy, as required by the Declaration Act. The Secretariat is supporting ministries in applying the Interim Approach.

- Approaches for consulting and cooperating with Indigenous partners pursuant to section 3 continue to evolve. The Secretariat has received feedback on the Interim Approach from Indigenous partners and ministries, including the challenges faced in applying this policy and opportunities for improvement:
 - Ministries are looking for more practical guidance from the Secretariat on how to best implement consultation and cooperation obligations.
 - Indigenous partners are asking that lessons learned to date be developed into tools and resources that support consistent consultation and cooperation approaches and ongoing improvement in achieving alignment of laws.
- Based on this feedback, the Secretariat is co-developing supplementary guidance in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous partners including the First Nations Leadership Council, the Alliance of BC Modern Treaty Nations, and Métis Nation British Columbia. In doing so, the Secretariat is building stronger relationships and supporting systemic changes to ensure the public service is meeting Section 3 obligations. This work also enhances the Secretariat's ability to inform the Province of legislative priorities.
- The supplemental guidelines provide additional advice on operationalizing consultation and cooperation, demonstrating continued progress in meeting Declaration Act obligations, and will continue to showcase the Province as a national leader in advancing reconciliation. They will continue to move the Province towards a lawmaking approach that is thoughtful, consistent, and supports our legal requirements to respect and affirm Indigenous rights.
- Additional resources will be developed with Indigenous partners and may include general FAQs, best practices, case studies, and general information on Indigenous governing bodies and decision-making tables.
- The Secretariat works closely with ministries in alignment of laws work. The guidance and resources developed will formalize the advice that is currently provided. The intention of the supplemental guidance is to level-set across the public service and ensure all ministry staff have consistent advice and guidance necessary to support their work.
- The Secretariat currently plans to release the guidance and an initial round of additional resources in the spring of 2025.

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION
DECLARATION ACT SECRETARIAT
2025 Estimates Note

Primary Contact

Simka Marshall

Legislative Engagement and Change

Cell: Government
Financial

ADM Responsible

Priscilla Sabbas-Watts

Legislative Transformation and Engagement

Cell: Government
Financial

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

Declaration Act Action Plan Review/Update

SPEAKING POINTS

- The 2025 ministry mandate letter directs me to “lead work to review and update the Declaration Act Action Plan by 2027, for the next five-year period.”
- The purpose of the review is to understand if the outcomes or goals of the Declaration Act Action Plan have been achieved and provide the opportunity for feedback to inform the update.
- The review must be guided by the Act and the Plan’s principles: done in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples, through a distinctions-based approach, with free, prior and informed consent.
- To uphold these principles within the Declaration Act legislation, public consultation must take place. The ministry (IRR) and The Government Digital Experience Division (GDX) have begun initial discussions to determine the approach and guiding questions to shape the online engagement platform.
- Initial conversations with Indigenous partners are required to determine their preferred level of involvement and engagement in the planning and delivery of the engagement process.
- Section 4.5 of the Declaration Act provides the opportunity to table a new Action Plan. The review process provides the opportunity to assess the need for updates to the plan.
- The review will support informed decision-making on scope and scale for the update. Any update to the Declaration Act will be done in consultation and cooperation with partners.

BACKGROUND

- The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act was passed unanimously in the house in 2019. After 2 years of consultation and cooperation, the Declaration Act Action Plan was released in April 2022, it is a five-year plan, concluding in 2027.
- The last public engagement on the Declaration Act was during the development of the Action Plan in 2021. A platform for consultation was hosted on the govTogetherBC website, and written submissions were received from First Nations, Industry partners, public organizations and special interest groups. Two rounds of engagement were conducted, one to collect information and one to confirm the refined information collected from phase 1.

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

Primary Contact

Stephanie Mannix

Reconciliation Strategies Branch

Cell: Government
Financial Information

ADM Responsible

Ann Marie Sam

Reconciliation Transformation Strategies Division

Cell: Government
Financial

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

Declaration Act Action Plan Indicator Framework

SPEAKING POINTS

- **The Declaration Act Action Plan commits the Province to work with Indigenous Peoples to identify suitable tools, indicators, and measures for monitoring, assessing, and reporting Declaration Act progress.**
- **Action Plan progress measures need to reflect the breadth, depth, and interconnectedness of the work underway to advance the Declaration Act.**
- **First Nations and Métis partners in BC have told us Declaration Act progress can be better represented through co-developed cross-cutting measures that reflect Indigenous concepts of wellbeing.**
- **As implementing the Action Plan is a cross-government effort, measuring progress in a meaningful way requires a whole-of-government approach.**
- **Working together to develop shared measurements will support all areas of the Action Plan in creating consistent and relevant measurements.**
- **The development of a new framework will take time to operationalize, my ministry has been working with Citizens Services (CITZ) to scope out the appropriate timing and resources needed to advance implementation of the framework.**

BACKGROUND

- The Action Plan Indicator Framework was developed by Big River Analytics and Tiskwat consulting.
- Engagement was conducted with the Alliance, FNLC and MNBC; however, deeper engagement will be required to develop the indicators in consultation and cooperation as committed to in the Declaration Act.
- Engagement is occurring across ministries to introduce the Framework concept and identify opportunities for alignment (i.e. Action Plan Action 3.14, Anti-racism Data Act, StrongerBC Economic Plan, Crown Agencies and Board Resourcing Office, BC Statistics, etc.).
- The implementation of a new framework will not occur for the 2024/2025 Annual Report as it requires alignment with CITZ and other data work under the Action Plan.

Primary Contact

Stephanie Mannix
Reconciliation Strategies Branch
Cell: Government
Financial

ADM Responsible

Ann Marie Sam
Reconciliation Transformation Strategies Division
Cell: Government
Financial

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and
Reconciliation

Date: February 6, 2025

Minister Responsible: Hon. Christine Boyle

Section 6 & 7 Agreements & Question of Veto

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Sections 6 and 7 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act provides a mechanism for the negotiation of joint and consent-based decision-making agreements with Indigenous governing bodies.
- Declaration Act decision-making agreements help address the legacy of colonialism by allowing the Province to work shoulder-to-shoulder with Indigenous Peoples on decisions that affect them.

Section 6 & 7 agreements

- B.C. has two consent-based agreements with the Tahltan [tall-tan] Central Government under section 7 of the Declaration Act for the Eskay Creek and the Red Chris mines.
- The Tahltan [tall-tan] agreements also operate under section 7 of the Environmental Assessment Act.
- Over the past two years, B.C. announced mandates to negotiate a joint and consent-based decision agreements with the Tahltan [tall-tan] Nation, and 'Namgis [nhum-geez] First Nation.

If asked if Section 7 consent-based decision making provides a veto:

- Section 7 agreements are about sharing decision-making jurisdiction with Indigenous governing bodies.
- This is not about a veto; this is about a decision that is made consistent with an agreement, which requires transparency and accountability.
- A veto is a decision which is made without a process, without structure; it is often pre-determined.
- A veto doesn't give insight into the decision-making process; the applicant is simply faced with a 'no' with no reasons and no apparent due process.
- Consent, on the other hand, is none of those things.

- **Section 7 agreements set out criteria; they provide an understanding of the decision-making process; and they provide opportunities for third parties to be effectively heard.**
- **Finally, if people disagree, they can challenge a decision; they are judicially reviewable.**
- **That is not a veto.**

KEY FACTS:

Sections 6 and 7 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act) allows for flexibility for the Province to enter into agreements with a broad range of Indigenous governing bodies – this could include Indigenous governments outside of Indian Act Bands and incorporated organizations such as multiple nations working together as a collective, or hereditary governments and treaty nations. The resulting agreements set out the processes for joint or consent-based statutory decision-making, including dispute resolution, while clarifying roles and responsibilities of the Province and the Indigenous governing body.

Section 7 of the Declaration Act is an enabling tool. It gives the ability to seek a mandate from Cabinet to pursue for shared decision-making and consent agreements – in other words, agreements to exercise statutory authority either jointly, or with consent. Each decision-making agreement is different from another, and as such, are negotiated and subsequently approved on a case-by-case basis.

Section 6 is very broad in nature and allows the Province to enter into agreements with Indigenous governing bodies, authorized by rights holders, in addition to other representative entities such as Indian Act bands. Section 6 does not identify any particular agreement types, other than to clarify that it does not include agreements included in section 7 of the Declaration Act. For example, the openness of section 6 has been used in Bill 38, the Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendment Act, and the Emergency and Disaster Management Act, to create opportunities for joint and consent decision-making agreements in relation to statutory powers in that legislation.

Communications Director responsible: Leanne Ritchie
Responsible program: DM Tom McCarthy
Prepared by: Kim Hudson

KEY MESSAGES: *Section 7 / consent vs veto*

Key Messages

- We are advancing agreements with First Nations and section 7 agreements are already enabled under several pieces of legislation.
- We remain committed to the promise of shared decision-making agreements.
- We've seen how it helps to bring certainty and stability for all.

If asked if Section 7 consent-based decision making provides a veto:

- Section 7 agreements are about sharing decision-making jurisdiction with Indigenous partners.
- This is not about a veto; this is about a decision that is made consistent with an agreement, which requires transparency and accountability.
- A veto is a decision which is made without a process, without structure; it is often pre-determined.
- A veto doesn't give insight into the decision-making process; the applicant is simply faced with a 'no' with no reasons and no apparent due process. Consent, on the other hand, is none of those things.
 - Our section 7 agreements to date, and those that will follow, build a strong and transparent process.
 - They set out criteria; they provide an understanding of the decision-making process; and they provide opportunities for third parties to be effectively heard.
 - Finally, if people disagree, they can challenge a decision; they are judicially reviewable.
 - That is not veto. That is sound decision-making, made together, to make the Province stronger.
 - The Province is committed to doing that work with First Nations.

Background:

Sections 6 and 7 of the Declaration Act allows for flexibility for the Province to enter into agreements with a broad range of Indigenous governing bodies. Much of the initial work to conceptualize and scope a section 7 agreement with an IGB occurs as part of the ongoing government-to-government relationships B.C. is continuously building with rights and title holders. These initial discussions are confidential in nature until a formal mandate is approved.

Once the Province has a mandate to negotiate a section 7 agreement with an Indigenous governing body, formal negotiations begin. This initiates a requirement for engagement with affected local governments and other parties. The Province is required to identify all parties it intends to engage with. Any agreement that results from negotiations must be approved by government and published before it can come into effect. These accomplishments are also typically accompanied by media releases, providing for transparency and public awareness.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and
Reconciliation

Date: April 24, 2025

Minister Responsible: Hon. Christine Boyle

Declaration Act Engagement Fund

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- In April 2023, the B.C. government announced the \$200-million Declaration Act Engagement Fund – a direct response to calls from First Nations for support to increase participation in the development and alignment of provincial laws, implementation of the Declaration Act Action Plan.
- The one-time funding compliment is creating flexibility for First Nations to engage with the Province on areas of interest in ways that respond to their unique needs and priorities.
- As of January 2025, 95% of eligible First Nations in B.C. had been approved for funding through the DAEF in its second year.

If asked about the eligibility of transboundary Nations, hereditary or aggregate governance structures:

- Eligible First Nations are encouraged to coordinate their DAEF funding among relevant governance structures.

KEY FACTS:

In April 2023, the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) announced the new Declaration Act Engagement Fund (DAEF) as a direct response to calls from First Nations leaders for funding to help consult and co-operate with the Province on implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act).

The DAEF has increased the capacity for First Nations to be properly engaged in the implementation of the Declaration Act Action Plan and alignment of provincial laws. The flexible fund may be used by Nations to support engagement with the Province that could include funding for support strengthening internal governance systems, hiring staff, training, holding community-level engagement, and other resources required.

First Nation in B.C., including self-governing First Nations, Modern Treaty Nations, and First Nations under the Indian Act are eligible to apply for DAEF any time throughout the duration of the program. Each First Nation in B.C. is eligible for \$260,000 annually for a total of \$1.04 million over four years through a single, streamlined application. Eligible DAEF applicants may also allocate DAEF funds to other representative bodies, such as aggregate governance structures like Tribal Councils or Nations with multiple member First Nations, or hereditary or other traditional governance structures, or designate them to apply directly.

The New Relationship Trust (NRT) – as administrators of the program – formalizes the terms, conditions, and funding relationship with Nations through contribution agreements. Funds are distributed as non-repayable funding contributions to Nations through a low-barrier application process.

The New Relationship Trust

The New Relationship Trust is an independent non-profit Indigenous-led organization dedicated to strengthening First Nations in British Columbia through capacity building. NRT invests in First Nations by supporting them in five key capacity development areas: governance capacity, education, language, youth and Elders, and economic development. NRT was established in 2006 through the enactment of the New Relationship Trust Act, Bill 11 – 2006.

The DAEF is designed intentionally to reduce administrative burden on Nations, while maintaining the necessary rigour for reporting requirements. Nations also must report on types of activities they are using the fund for to NRT, who in turn must report to the Ministry/government.

The NRT designed a program to distribute the funding that includes several accountability components:

- Vetting of applications submitted by First Nations to ensure alignment with the parameters of the fund.
- Execution of a funding agreement between NRT and each recipient that outlines expectations, roles, and responsibilities regarding the funding.
- First Nations must complete a workplan as a yearly deliverable to receive additional funding. Through the workplan First Nations can indicate the Declaration Act Action Plan actions and alignment of laws related work they are interested in participating in, as well as any priorities that fall under the secondary purpose of the fund.

NRT provides mid-year and year-end reporting to the Province, as well as on an as-needed basis, accounting for funds spent and evaluating performance regarding the program objectives and outcomes.

NRT programs

Having the DAEF administered by the NRT enables the fund to benefit from NRT's extensive experience operating First Nations funding programs in the province and NRT's relationships with First Nations.

The NRT offers eight programs that have been funded by the Province:

Declaration Act Engagement Fund (DAEF)

Amount: Provides up to \$1,040,000 over four years

Duration: 4 years (2023-2027)

Projected Funding Total: \$209,040,000 (including interest on investment)

Purpose: Supports First Nations' participation in implementing the Declaration Act Action Plan and aligning provincial laws with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Eligible Applicants: B.C. First Nations

Impact: Enhances legal and policy engagement capacity on the Declaration Act, and government-to-government relationships

BC Indigenous Clean Energy Initiative (BCICEI)

Amount: Provides up to \$500,000 per project

Projected Funding Total: \$188,304,712 (including interest on investment)

Duration: March 2023-March 2033

Purpose: Funds clean energy projects, including feasibility studies, environmental reviews, and installations

Eligible Applicants: B.C. First Nations

Impact: Promotes energy sovereignty and economic development; has awarded \$30 million to over 130 projects proposed by more than 90 First Nations

ADVICE TO MINISTER

Community Energy Diesel Reduction (CEDR)

Funding: Project-specific amounts

Duration and Funding Amounts (including interest on investment):

- **Agreement 1:** March 2022-March 2026
 - **Projected Funding Total:** \$36,107,000
- **Agreement 2:** March 2023-March 2028
 - **Projected Funding Total:** \$32,811,562

Purpose: Supports remote communities in reducing diesel reliance for electricity generation through clean energy initiatives

Eligible Applicants: Remote B.C. communities that rely on diesel generators, most of which are governed by First Nations

Impact: Aims to reduce reliance on diesel fuel for electricity generation with energy efficiency and renewable energy projects; has awarded over \$22 million to 42 projects in 22 remote communities

BC Indigenous Cannabis Business Fund

Amount: Provides up to, or sometimes over, \$1,000,000 in capital contributions

Duration: 2023-2026

Total Funding Amount: \$2,500,000

Purpose: Supports economic development in the regulated cannabis industry

Eligible Applicants: B.C. First Nations, Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs

Impact: Encourages participation in emerging markets

Indigenous Food Security and Sovereignty (IFS) Grant

Amount:

- Stream 1: Up to \$150,000 for community businesses; up to \$100,000 for entrepreneurs
- Stream 2: Up to \$250,000 for community businesses; up to \$150,000 for entrepreneurs

Duration: March 2023-March 2026

Total Funding Amount: \$30,000,000

Purpose: Supports development and implementation of Indigenous food systems and agriculture projects

Eligible Applicants: B.C. First Nations, Tribal Councils, Métis Chartered Communities, Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs

Impact: Enhances food sovereignty and sustainability

Guardians and Stewardship Training Initiative (GSTI)

Amount: Three streams offering up to \$50,000, \$150,000, and \$300,000

Duration: 2024-2026

Total Funding Amount: \$2,780,000 (does not include NRT admin costs)

Purpose: Provides funding for training and education of First Nations Guardians

Eligible Applicants: Various First Nations entities and organizations

Impact: Strengthens environmental stewardship and resource management capacities

Indigenous Labour Market Fund

Amount: Up to \$250,000 per grant

Duration: 2023-2026

Total Funding Amount: \$22,500,000

Purpose: Addresses labour market gaps through studies, cultural recognition development, and job fairs

Eligible Applicants: B.C. First Nations, tribal councils, ISET offices, Métis Nation of BC, Indigenous organizations

Impact: Improves employment opportunities and workforce development

Nursing Scholarships and Bursaries: Available to First Nations (status or non-status), Métis, or Inuit students enrolled full-time in accredited nursing programs within British Columbia.

Total Funding Amount: \$1,800,000

Purpose: Nursing Scholarships and Bursaries are awarded to students pursuing Nursing studies at the Diploma, Undergraduate, or Masters level. This program is open to all Indigenous nursing students who study and reside in British Columbia.

Impact: Enhances educational attainment and fosters leadership within Indigenous communities and the health sector.

Media Interest: There was decent media pick up with the initial DAEF announcement (April 2023) and one Black Press article generated from the NRT's echo announcement in May 2023.

Communications Director responsible: Leanne Ritchie

Responsible program: ADM Ann Marie Sam

Prepared by: Kim Hudson

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Date: April 7, 2025 Minister Responsible: Hon. Christine Boyle	Distinctions Based Approach (DBA)
--	---

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- **A distinctions-based approach requires that the Province's dealings with First Nations, Métis and Inuit be conducted in a manner that acknowledges the specific rights, interests, priorities and concerns of each, while respecting and acknowledging these distinct Peoples with unique cultures, histories, rights, laws and governments.**
- **Not all rights are the same among or between Indigenous Peoples and they have different applications in different provinces throughout the country.**
- **The Distinctions-based Approach Primer is assisting the provincial government in building a better understanding of the legal basis for, and core elements of, a distinctions-based approach in all of the Province's relations with First Nations, Métis and Inuit.**

Criticism:

- **We recognize that conversations about the distinctions-based approach can be difficult.**
- **It's important to be mindful that the specific rights discussed in the Primer don't encompass the whole of the Province's relationships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit, nor their relationships with each other.**
- **As the Primer is oriented towards legal concerns, the language does not always fully reflect the complexities of the lived realities of individual Indigenous people, their relationships and identities.**
- **The Primer is not meant to define the full scope of what it means to engage in a distinctions-based way. It is intended to prevent misunderstandings that could lead to conflict and confusion.**
- **The Primer is just a first step among many that will be required to fully implement a distinctions-based approach in B.C.**

KEY FACTS:

On Dec. 5, 2023, the Province released a Distinction-Based Approach Primer (the Primer) document to assist B.C. public service employees in understanding the current legal basis and core elements of a distinctions-based approach (DBA) in all relations with First Nations, Métis and Inuit. The Primer development was led by the Ministry of Indigenous Relations (MIRR) policy staff in collaboration with the Ministry of the Attorney General.

Advice/Recommendations; Intergovernmental Communications

Background on the development of the Primer:

During the development of the DBA Primer, several letters were sent to government from Indigenous organizations including FNLC (Dec. 7, 2023); the Alliance (Nov. 28, 2023); MNBC (Dec. 1, 2023); and BC Métis Federation (Dec. 11, 2023). They included feedback and criticism including support of the Primer and the clarification of government's position on Métis rights; that the Primer mischaracterizes the role of modern treaties; that public servants may misinterpret the Primer; and that the Primer continued a narrative of a section 35 rights' hierarchy. A news release was also issued by the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC – Dec. 7, 2023) in support of the Primer and of the clarification of B.C.'s position on Métis rights.

On April 22, 2024, the BC Métis Federation (BCMF) published a [distinctions-based approach \(DBA\) discussion paper](#). The paper claims a prime function of the Métis National Council (MNC) has been to create a DBA-approach where they are the only legitimate organization that represents Métis rights in Canada, at the exclusion of non-MNC organizations like BCMF. In July 2024, BCMF filed legal action against Ottawa for an alleged refusal to recognize the organization as a representative of Métis people in B.C. In September 2024 Chiefs from 16 Secwepemculecw and 45 Coast Salish First Nations issued a statement through the First Nations Leadership Council in opposition to the idea that historic Métis communities exist in the territories.

On September 6, 2024, MNBC submitted a position paper titled 'Metis Social Sector Rights – DBA Interim Measure', to the B.C. government with assertions of Section 35 rights and that MNBC is the representative rights-holding collective for Métis in B.C. The paper focuses on what MNBC believes are non-site-specific Métis social sector rights in B.C. MNBC has since requested that B.C. waits to respond to the position paper until MNBC has provided additional information to the Province.

Advice/Recommendations; Legal Information

Communications Director responsible: Leanne Ritchie
Responsible program: ADMs Julia Iwama/ Ann-Marie Sam
Prepared by: Julian Paquette

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

Engagement – First Nations

SPEAKING POINTS

- **Agreements are more successful when everyone has a chance to be heard.**
- **Government makes efforts to engage extensively throughout negotiations with those who may be affected by agreements and during implementation of those agreements.**
- **Sometimes, our efforts do not meet that standard, and we will work to ensure that the complexity of our work does not cause us to lose sight of the need to be as open as we can be.**
- **Every negotiation is unique and there is no one-size-fits-all template for engagement. The Province strives to be as transparent as possible with interest holders and bring them into discussions as early as possible.**
- **The Province is committed to openness and collaboration in our work to advance reconciliation in BC; we will continue to assess response to this commitment and make improvements when needed.**

BACKGROUND

- Examples of recent engagement:
 - *Gaayhlxid • Gíhlagalgang "Rising Tide" Haida Title Lands Agreement, 2024:* The ministry met with community and business leaders, hosted community meetings, and held sessions with local governments. Letters were co-drafted and sent on behalf of the ministry and the Council of the Haida Nation, and events organized to recognize different negotiation milestones (e.g. signing). The ministry also engages with the All Islands Protocol Table which serves as an information sharing and consensus building platform between the Council of the Haida Nation and local governments.
 - *The K'omoks, Kitselas and Kitsumkalum Treaties:* Engagement has been ongoing through treaty negotiations, which date back to the early 1990s. In recent years, the K'omoks, Kitselas and Kitsumkalum First Nations, along with Canada and BC, have broadly engaged with local communities, local governments, and interest and tenure holders on their proposed treaties. This engagement has included presentations, open houses, community events, letters and correspondence. Feedback was summarized in two *What We Heard* reports published in May 2023 and February 2024.

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

- *Land Title and Property Law Amendment Act, 2024*: The Province conducted broad engagement with First Nations, Modern Treaty Nations, the federal government, local governments, and key industry and business organizations to solicit feedback on the proposed legislative amendments. First Nations engagement included consulting all First Nations and First Nations Organizations, organizing virtual information sessions, and meeting with the First Nations Leadership Council. Interested governments, business, financial and industry organizations were also consulted with the form of engagement tailored to their interests. All feedback was summarized in a *What We Heard* report published in March 2024.
- *Union of BC Municipalities and BC Memorandum of Understanding (2024)*: Develop a workplan to engage with local governments during negotiations of Treaties and reconciliation agreements with First Nations and to support First Nation – local government relationship building.

Primary Contact

Robert Leece
Integrated Negotiations Branch
Cell: (250) 208-9482

ADM Responsible

Carolyn Kamper
Negotiations and Regional Operations Division
Cell: (250) 208-9482

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Ministry of Indigenous Relations &
Reconciliation

Date: March 14, 2025

Minister Responsible: Hon. Christine Boyle

Partner and Interest Holder Engagement

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- **Agreements are more successful when everyone has a chance to be heard.**
- **The goal of the ministry's engagement is to build and strengthen relationships and clear understanding of agreements and initiatives amongst all partners and interest holders, including local government, industry, and others.**
- **Community engagement promotes partnerships and collaboration between Indigenous Peoples, local governments, industry, partners and community members.**

If asked about closed-door negotiations

- **Any negotiation of potential transfer of Crown lands includes engagement for those who may be affected or have an interest in the area.**
- **The Province may also notify local governments, neighbouring First Nations, and organizations who may be affected or have an interest in other agreement terms before, during and after negotiations.**

KEY FACTS:

Every negotiation is unique and there is no one-size-fits-all template for engagement. The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) continues to work to improve engagement, with partners, local governments and interest holders as well as industry and business associations. Negotiating tables have a large degree of independence on when engagement begins and what form it should take. The greater the impact of a project on Indigenous Peoples or interested parties, the more complex and extensive the engagement strategy will be. The goal is to be as transparent as possible with partners and interest holders and bring them into the discussions as early as possible.

Due to the nature of some negotiations, it is necessary to have agreed upon proposed land areas with all First Nations impacted before releasing maps and details to local government, tenure holders and property owners. Other considerations include the status of the negotiations and the status of government's approval of the land transfers.

Advice/Recommendations; Intergovernmental Communications

A ministry engagement strategy guides the various ministries in facilitating meaningful and consistent engagement. There are six guiding principles that support the ministries' stakeholder engagement strategies:

- Communication – early and open engagement
- Transparency – clear information and feedback
- Collaboration – work together on outcomes
- Inclusiveness – understand and involve
- Integrity – foster respect and trust
- Commitment – maintain engagement

MIRR is committed to strong relationships with all levels of government and Crown corporations. This commitment is advanced through the management of several MOUs, including with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and the BC Energy Regulator.

The MOUs strengthen partnerships and collaboration between governments, municipalities and First Nations communities, and enhance the ministry's ability to understand the views of partners and interest holders to facilitate planning and decision-making.

The ministry has a list of about 50 key partners and interest holders; however, the list is not exhaustive and varies per First Nation and agreement. Where public engagement is required or media is anticipated, GCPE provides support for engagement.

Media interest: Public and media interest in engagement about negotiations with First Nations in B.C. have been the most prominent concerning the shíshálh Nation and the Land Act.

In early 2024, the Province proposed amendments to the Land Act. At the same time, proposed changes to the shíshálh swiya Dock Management Plan were met with public outcry. Coverage was critical of the lack of clear public engagement on the plans. On Jan. 29, 2025, the Province and shíshálh Nation announced they had signed the Foundation Agreement renewal. In late Feb. 2025, Vaughn Palmer (Vancouver Sun), Justine Hunter (Globe and Mail) and Bob Mackin (The Breaker) authored articles critical of the time between the agreement signing and its announcement.

Communications Director responsible: Leanne Ritchie
Responsible program: DM Tom McCarthy
Prepared by: Kim Hudson

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

Canada's Role in the Work of Reconciliation

SPEAKING POINTS

- BC and Canada both have roles to advance reconciliation with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in Canada, informed by the division of powers between governments.
- Like BC, Canada has legislated the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) under the federal *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*. As part of that work, Canada has developed an Action Plan, consisting of 181 Action Plan measures, to implement the UN Declaration. Nineteen of those action plan measures reference BC or Provinces/Territories more generally.
 - ADM Ann Marie Sam, Reconciliation and Transformation Strategies Division, and ADM Laurie Sargent, Indigenous Rights and Relations at the Department of Justice Canada, co-chair a quarterly bi-lateral table on UNDRIP implementation in our respective jurisdictions.
- In addition, many issues central to the negotiation of treaties, agreements, and other constructive arrangements fall under provincial jurisdiction, most notably those including Crown land and resources.
- BC works with Canada in various ways through negotiations, both formally to negotiate treaties under the BC Treaty Commission, and informally to achieve common outcomes.
- Where federal and provincial interests align, BC works with Canada as represented primarily by Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, Indigenous Services Canada.
- As per the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Call to Action #43, Canada has established an independent National Council for Reconciliation. The role of the National Council is to monitor progress towards reconciliation in all sectors of Canadian society, including progress made towards the TRC Calls to Action.
 - The Council will be responsible for reporting on all levels of government annually. As such, we can also expect that BC will be called upon to report on progress made towards reconciliation, including our progress on the TRC Calls to Action.
- On March 20, 2025, Canada announced the establishment of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (UN Declaration Act) Action Plan Advisory Committee (APAC).

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

- **The APAC is an Indigenous-led, independent body made up of 10 experts from diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis backgrounds and experiences, including Historic and Modern Treaty partners. The Committee reflects distinct perspectives shaped by Indigenous cultures, languages, traditions, and experiences, including Indigenous people living in urban areas, regional and gender diversity.**
- **BC representation on APAC is Lydia Hwitsum, elected by the First Nations Summit Chiefs in Assembly in April 2024 as Commissioner. Lydia is from the Cowichan Nation. She previously served three terms as Chief of Cowichan Tribes; two terms on the First Nations Summit Political Executive; as well as serving as the BC Representative to the AFN Women's Council.**
- **The establishment is an important step in advancing implementation of measure 22 of the Shared Priorities chapter of the UN Declaration Act Action Plan.**
- **The Committee's advice is intended to complement, and not to replace, consultation and cooperation directly with First Nations, Inuit and Métis rightsholders and representative institutions, which will continue to be carried out through a range of mechanisms. The APAC's work is expected to begin in April 2025, supported by Justice Canada.**

BACKGROUND

- Under the distribution of legislative powers set out in the *Constitution Act, 1867*, section 91(24) provides the Parliament of Canada with, "exclusive Legislative Authority" in relation to, "Indians, and Lands reserved for the Indians."
- The Supreme Court of Canada confirmed the federal Crown bears unique responsibilities flowing from section 91(24). The federal Crown is responsible, "to provide for the welfare and protection of native peoples" in Canada. This broad duty underlying section 91(24) mandates the federal government to provide leadership in pursuing the reconciliation of Crown sovereignty with the pre-existing sovereignty of the Indigenous peoples of Canada.
- Section 35(1) of the *Constitution Act, 1982* recognizes and affirms existing Aboriginal and treaty rights. In accordance with section 35, Indigenous Peoples can enter into treaties, agreements, and other constructive arrangements with the Crown. These agreements are the preferred approach to reconciling Crown and Indigenous sovereignty.

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

- The Province works collaboratively with Canada in negotiations, particularly in the context of treaties under the BC Treaty Commission. In other circumstances, BC and Canada may each negotiate bilaterally with a First Nation but still work towards common outcomes.
 - For example, BC and Canada separately negotiated bilateral title agreements with the Council of the Haida Nation as approvals were not aligned between respective governments to reach a trilateral arrangement. However, each agreement still achieves the shared outcome to deliver on Haida title and governance recognition.

Primary Contact

Ruth Forsythe
Intergovernmental Relations and Stakeholder
Engagement
Cell: Government
Financial

ADM Responsible

Ann Marie Sam
Reconciliation and Transformation Strategies
Division
Cell: Government
Financial

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

Current Federal Political Climate Impacts

SPEAKING POINTS

- **As we all know, the federal government is in an election period, with the election now called for April 28, 2025.**
- **Federal elections have implications on the timing of our reconciliation work given our shared responsibilities for reconciliation.**
- **Some tripartite agreement processes, such as the negotiation of treaties, will slow down as the federal government enters the interregnum period.**
- **BC will continue our work to advance reconciliation in partnership with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples and will re-engage with Canada at tripartite tables following the federal election.**

BACKGROUND

- Reconciliation in British Columbia intersects with the responsibilities of both the Province and Canada.
- Negotiations that address constitutional aspects of reconciliation, including but not limited to treaty, are typically tripartite in nature, or may involve separate but parallel provincial and federal negotiations with a First Nation.
- The current election creates uncertainty for negotiating tables, which may delay timeframes for planned negotiations outcomes, including the intention to initial treaties with the Te'mexw Treaty Association nations early this summer.
- In other contexts, Canada or First Nations are seeking to accelerate the conclusion of negotiations, placing pressure on provincial processes for policy review and approvals.
- The Province and Canada share the cost of treaties with First Nations in BC in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between Canada and BC Respecting the Sharing of Pre-treaty Costs, Settlement Costs, Implementation Costs and the Costs of Self Government. The Province primarily contributes Crown land and Canada primarily contributes cash for treaty settlements.

Primary Contact

Ruth Forsythe
Intergovernmental Relations and Stakeholder
Engagement
Cell: Government

ADM Responsible

Ann Marie Sam
Reconciliation and Transformation Strategies
Division
Cell: Government

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

Federal-Provincial Cost Sharing for Treaty and Long-Term Reconciliation Agreements

SPEAKING POINTS

- **The Province and Canada share the cost of treaties with First Nations in BC under a 1993 Memorandum of Understanding.**
- **This long-standing, bilateral arrangement supports Canada and BC to provide coordinated joint offers from Canada and BC to First Nations in the treaty process.**

BACKGROUND

- Cost-sharing is an important mechanism that enables the Province to sustainably manages the costs of treaty agreements; the 1993 MOU requires that the federal government recognize the value of lands and resources offered by BC as part of a treaty settlement to a First Nation.
- The composition of treaty settlement packages are determined through negotiations. BC contributes primarily provincial Crown land; Canada contributes primarily cash for treaty settlements.
- The Province shares the cumulative total costs of treaties with Canada equally under the 1993 MOU when the value of land and resources is accounted for. The arrangement also creates efficiencies by avoiding table-by-table negotiations for federal-provincial cost sharing.
- Policy innovations such as the Recognition and Reconciliation of Rights Policy have created new, incremental pathways for treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements that can provide a Nation with early land or cash benefits that count towards settlement under a future, s.35 constitutionally protected agreement.
- The 1993 MOU is applicable only to the BC Treaty Commission process; there is no formal cost-sharing arrangement for other incremental reconciliation agreements, and to date, no formal federal participation in cost sharing has been obtained on these types of agreements.
- Canada has formally requested to work with BC to review and renew our bilateral cost-sharing arrangements. BC is in the process of seeking internal mandates for this work. In the meantime, federal and provincial Deputy Ministers confirmed the 1993 MOU continues to apply to advanced tables in the treaty process.

Primary Contact

CN Ricardo Toledo
Fiscal Branch
Cell| Government
Financial

ADM Responsible

Julia Iwama
Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives Division
Cell|Government
Financial

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Date: April 28, 2025 Minister Responsible: Hon. Christine Boyle	First Peoples Cultural Council - general
---	--

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- We are working with First Nations across B.C. so they can fully exercise their distinct rights related to their languages, traditional knowledge and cultural heritage.
- There is incredible language diversity in British Columbia – there are 36 First Nations languages. Together, they make up more than half of all First Nations languages in Canada.
- These are the original languages of this land and contribute to the unique diversity of the cultures in B.C.
- Together, the First Peoples' Cultural Council and the First Peoples' Foundation are laying the groundwork so that First Nations languages can be passed on to future generations.

Funding support:

- To support First Nations languages, heritage, arts and cultures programming, B.C. announced \$15 million per year in Budget 2025 for the First Peoples' Cultural Council.
- This includes \$12 million per year dedicated to addressing the growing demand for language revitalization, and will provide critical jobs for speakers, particularly Elders and First Nations' women.
- Since 2018, B.C. has committed \$136 million to support First Nations languages, arts, cultural heritage and traditional knowledge.
- The Province remains committed to supporting First Nations language revitalization in B.C.

Conference Board of Canada report:

- This report by the Conference Board of Canada on the impact of FPCC's cultural revitalization work affirms the benefits to First Nations' communities and also to the broader public.

- It clearly shows that FPCC's support of language, heritage, arts and cultural revitalization creates jobs, supports our economy in a meaningful way and uplifts local communities.

Additional messaging:

- There are more language learners than ever. According to the most recent data, there are more than 17,000 First Nations language learners in the province.
- Communities are developing language revitalization plans, have trained staff, and are implementing programs that make a difference by documenting the languages and supporting new speakers.
- Recent research shows that people are benefiting from provincial investments in cultural revitalization, which supports B.C.'s economic commitments to building a sustainable economy with good-paying jobs.
- Over the past fiscal year, FPCC grants supported many valuable jobs, a lot of which are held by women, Knowledge Keepers and Elders.

EXAMPLES

- In Bella Bella, with funding support through FPCC, the Haíłzaqv [pronounced HELT'-zuk] language revitalization program has grown from one staff member to over 50.
- Haíłzaqv programming now includes immersion learning through a preschool language nest, adult language classes, mentor-apprentice opportunities and curriculum development.
- The Haíłzaqv language is being documented through recordings, archiving and digitization. Some language learners are now teachers with careers in language revitalization in their remote community.

KEY FACTS:

In Budget 2025, B.C. announced stable funding of \$15 million per year for the First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) to support First Nations' language and culture programming. This is to address the provincial funding that was provided in 2022, which sunsets March 31, 2025. In 2022, the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) provided \$25 million to the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation (FPCF) for community-based grants in arts, heritage, and language revitalization, which was to be administered over three years by FPCC.

On Dec. 11, 2024, FPCC released a report by the Conference Board of Canada that measures the economic impact of FPCC's operations and investments in languages, arts and heritage during the 2023-24 fiscal year. The study shows that the economic benefits of investing in languages revitalization, arts and heritage of First Nations in B.C. extends beyond FPCC's expenses through grants and operational expenses.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

On Feb. 28, 2023, B.C. Budget Day, the Province announced a permanent budget lift to FPCC for their core operations providing just over \$7 million in 2025/26 and onwards. The Province allocated \$50 million in 2018 over four years to support FPCC's work on language revitalization with First Nations. FPCC and the Foundation have also received several one-time grants in support of their mandates over the last few years.

MIRR and ministry partners (Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport; Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills; and Ministry of Finance's Gender Equity Office) have worked collaboratively to support FPCC's full mandate: revitalization of First Nations languages, arts, cultures and heritage.

First Peoples' Cultural Council:

FPCC supports First Nations' people whose communities are B.C.-based in their efforts to revitalize languages, arts, cultures and heritage. FPCC's mandate is to serve 206 First Nations in B.C., 36 languages, more than 90 language dialects and many people who are leading First Nations arts, culture and heritage revitalization. It was formed as a Crown corporation at the request of B.C. First Nations leaders in 1990.

With respect to language revitalization, FPCC invests in strategies that result in fluent speakers and builds long-term capacity in communities. FPCC funding is for community use outside of the public K-12 system.

First Peoples' Cultural Foundation:

The First Peoples' Cultural Foundation is a First Nations-led, non-political, non-profit society established in 2000 to support the vitality of Indigenous languages, arts, and cultural heritage in B.C. Since its inception, the Foundation has partnered with FPCC to provide programming and funding to First Nations throughout the province.

Media Interest: Media stories began appearing (late fall 2023) related to projected federal cuts to FPCC languages revitalization funding. Occasional positive media stories run about FPCC-supported language revitalization projects. The Conference Board of Canada report also generated some media coverage related to FPCC's economic impact.

Communications Director responsible: Leanne Ritchie

Responsible program: Julia Iwama

Prepared by: Julian Paquette

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and
Reconciliation
Date: April 28, 2025
Minister Responsible: Hon. Christine Boyle

FPCC federal funding

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- I have heard the concerns about decreased federal funding levels and the potential impact to First Nations' language revitalization efforts in the future.
- B.C. remains committed to supporting First Nations to revitalize languages and cultures as part of our ongoing work to implement the UN Declaration and create tangible improvements in the quality of life of Indigenous Peoples.
- To increase supports for First Nations language and cultural revitalization, in Budget 2025 we committed \$15 million per year in annual program funding for the First Peoples' Cultural Council.
- This brings the Ministry's support to more than \$22 million a year.
- We encourage the federal government to also take action to address its shortfall in funding.

KEY FACTS:

The federal government passed the Indigenous Languages Act in 2019. The legislation states that, "the Government of Canada is committed to providing adequate, sustainable and long-term funding for the reclamation, revitalization, maintenance and strengthening of Indigenous languages."

The First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) received significant federal funding to support language revitalization as a result of the legislation, including more than \$38 million in 2023/24. ^{Intergovernmental} Communications

The Indigenous Languages Act is set for its first five-year review in October 2025.

Intergovernmental Communications

The Province began receiving correspondence in summer of 2023 from First Nations and First Nations' organizations regarding possible funding reductions in 2024/25 from DCH and how this would impact language revitalization efforts for First Nations in B.C.

The B.C. Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation has continued to advocate to the federal Minister of Canadian Heritage about concerns in a drop in federal funding levels for First Nations language revitalization.

Intergovernmental Communications

The BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) and the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) have also continued to advocate for sustainable funding and in 2024 passed resolutions to call on the Province for a co-developed BC First Nations Languages Act. These resolutions also included direction to work together (as the First Nations Leadership Council) to “seek legal advice on the advisability and feasibility of a class action lawsuit and/or human rights tribunal case against the Province of B.C. and the Government of Canada for the underfunding of First Nations languages for B.C. First Nations.”

According to the 2022 Report on the Status of BC First Nations Languages, the number of language learners has increased over the last four years by 20 per cent. Final community reports in 2022/23 indicated FPCC funding supported more than 4,700 jobs (including 1,900 full and part-time jobs, with an additional 2,800 people earning income because of FPCC grants.)

Advice/Recommendations; Intergovernmental Communications

Media Interest: Media stories began to appear in late fall 2023 related to projected cuts to FPCC Indigenous languages revitalization funding.

Communications Director responsible: Leanne Ritchie

Responsible program: Julia Iwama, ADM

Prepared by: Julian Paquette

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and
Reconciliation

Date: February 18, 2025

Minister Responsible: Hon. Christine Boyle

Forest Consultation and Revenue Sharing Agreement (FCRSA) Program

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Since 2015, the Province has engaged with First Nations, including through the First Nations Forestry Council, on how to improve the Forest Consultation and Revenue Sharing Agreements (FCRSA) program.
- In April 2022, the Province announced an interim enhancement to the FCRSA program, while broader engagement on a new fiscal framework, including forestry revenue sharing takes place.
- As of February 2025, approximately 66% of eligible First Nations have active FCRSAs and are receiving the interim revenue sharing increase.

If asked about the decline in FCRSA payments

- After several years of strong revenue generation in the forest sector, conditions have shifted, and the industry is facing a challenging time.
- Forest revenues generated through stumpage and other sources have started to decline in line with industry conditions, through decreased stumpage rates and reduced levels of harvest.
- Forestry revenues are expected to remain relatively low for at least several years, which will have ramifications for all governments, communities, businesses, and families who rely on this sector.
- We recognize the importance of forestry revenue sharing to First Nations communities and the challenges posed by declining FCRSA payments, driven by decreases in the overall forestry activity in B.C.
- This is a difficult time for the sector, and the Province is committed to working collaboratively with First Nations to navigate these shifts.
- As well, the Minister of Forests will:
 - continue to ensure the ministry works with communities, labour, forestry and forest product companies, and First Nations to review BC Timber Sales to ensure that the model is responsive to the new realities of the industry and the need for a strong connection between our forests and sustainable jobs;

- **continue to bring together industry, First Nations, and communities through forest landscape planning tables – to chart a path forward for the stewardship of B.C.'s forests and forest industry;**
- **work across government and with First Nations to ensure the prompt, efficient, and effective delivery of permits required by industry; and**
- **work to secure a more sustainable future for First Nations and communities that depend on local forests for their economic strength by expanding the community forest program.**

KEY FACTS:

Forestry Consultation Revenue Sharing Agreements (FCRSA) provide First Nations governments with economic benefits based on harvest activities in their territories. The program has been in place in one form or another for more than two decades.

On April 27, 2022, the Province announced an interim enhancement to the FCRSA program, while broader engagement on forestry revenue sharing policy takes place in the context of the new fiscal framework (NFF) work. Since April 2022, B.C. has 129 agreements signed (118 renewals, 11 new agreements) on the new template, and all First Nations with active agreements are receiving the interim increase.

The number of active agreements fluctuate from month to month due to agreements expiring and renewing.

Government Financial Information; Intergovernmental Communications

Changes to FCRSA program, including and interim enhancement and language

Under the previous formula, First Nations were eligible to share up to \$68.08 million, or between 3 and 5 percent of stumpage revenues from activities in their territories.

Under the interim enhancement, effective April 1, 2022:

- FCRSA district revenue sharing rates have increased by 5 percent, from 3, 4 or 5 per cent to 8, or 10 percent. The rate for BC Timber Sales revenues has increased by an additional 3 percent to 11, 12 or 13 percent.
 - The interim formula, with an enhancement of \$62.67 million per year, increased the

ADVICE TO MINISTER

total available revenue sharing up to \$130.754 million in the 2022/23 fiscal year.

In March 2024, the FCRSA template was amended to remove the requirement that First Nations acknowledge the FCRSA payments as “a contribution towards any accommodation that maybe required”. This change address the issues First Nations have frequently raised

All First Nations with active agreements continue to receive the lift and all new agreements and renewals will continue to be at the increased revenue sharing levels.

NFF engagement

The Province began engaging on the co-development of principles for a new fiscal framework and a new forestry revenue sharing model with First Nations in Nov. 2022. From Nov. 2022 to May 2023, the Province participated in more than 50 government-to-government meetings and received feedback from more than 90 First Nations communities on a new fiscal framework and forestry revenue sharing model. This engagement process has brought to the forefront the complexity of this work, in terms of the unique interests and values of each First Nation and the interrelationship of revenue sharing with critical questions of decision-making and land management.

For more information on NFF, please see separate NFF issues note.

As the co-development process continues, the existing revenue sharing calculations (including the lift announced in 2022) will continue.

Advice/Recommendations; Intergovernmental Communications
Advice/Recommendations; Intergovernmental Communications
Advice/Recommendations

Media Interest: There was broad coverage of the initial announcement in April 2022, including a widely covered CP story, and some regional follow-up covering what the new formula meant for individual First Nations. First Nations may make their own public statements when they become aware of delayed timelines for new forestry revenue sharing model that may get picked up by the media.

Communications Director responsible: Leanne Ritchie
Responsible program: ADMs Cam Filmer / Carolyn Kamper
Prepared by: Kim Hudson

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and
Reconciliation

Date: March 14, 2025

Minister Responsible: Hon. Christine Boyle

Former Residential School and Hospital Sites Response

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- **First Nations in B.C. are investigating the sites of former Indian Residential Schools and Indian Hospitals across the province.**
- **We know that these institutions hold many unanswered questions for survivors, their families and their communities. These investigations are another step on the path toward truth, healing and justice.**
- **The Province's role in the Indigenous-led response includes:**
 - **Providing support to lead communities to develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing research, identification, documentation, commemoration and protection of residential school and Indian hospital sites, and**
 - **Enhancing existing services provided by First Nations Health Authority, the Indian Residential School Survivors Society, Tsow-Tun-Le-Lum [TSOW-tun LAY-lum] Society and Métis Nation BC. This will ensure survivors can access culturally safe and trauma-informed supports when and where they need them.**
- **The Province has provided funding to support First Nation-led investigations at all 18 Indian Residential School sites and three Indian Hospitals across B.C.**
- **The federal government maintains a central role in addressing the history and legacy of the residential school system. We continue to work with the federal government to make sure communities can access a range of resources to assist them at all stages of their work.**
- **The rise in residential school denialism has posed one of the largest challenges to this difficult work because it seeks to reject or misrepresent basic facts about the legacy of residential schools and undermine truth and reconciliation efforts.**
- **It has been well documented that the residential school system inflicted horrific crimes and heinous physical, sexual, emotional and spiritual abuse against the children who were forced to attend.**

- First Nations are at different stages in this process and are in the best position to make decisions about the search for missing children, in consultation with the communities directly impacted by these institutions.

If asked: How is the Province addressing denialism?

- The Province takes the rise in residential school denialism seriously, recognizing the harm that it causes former students and their families as well as the contractors and consultants working for the communities.
- Funding provided by the provincial and federal governments has been used by communities for site security.
- The attempts by some to discredit the findings at former residential schools is deeply disturbing and perpetuates a troubling and persistent pattern of thought that seeks to deny the very real experiences of former students and their families.
- First Nations are in the best position to disclose information about the findings from their investigations and will share additional details in due course.
- As noted in the interim report from the Independent Special Interlocutor, the responsibility to combat denialism should not rest on the shoulders of survivors alone.
- The Province has made education about the history and legacy of the residential school system a key priority.
- September 30, 2023 marked the first year that the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation was observed as a provincial statutory day in British Columbia.
 - This provides an opportunity to engage and educate more British Columbians about the history of colonialism and its continued impact on Indigenous communities today.

If asked about the St. Joseph's Mission property acquisition:

- First Nations have been clear that site access and protection is a key priority, particularly for those sites located on private property.
- This purchase provides for the immediate protection of the property from any future development while ensuring that former students, their families and their communities can visit the site for cultural, spiritual, personal or other commemorative purposes.
- As the owner of this property, Williams Lake First Nation can now work with former students, families and communities on a long-term vision

ADVICE TO MINISTER

and plan for protecting and commemorating the site of the former St. Joseph's Mission.

- **While planning is still in the early stages, this may include opportunities to re-imagine the site as a place for reflection, remembrance, truth telling and public education.**
- **This purchase is a positive example of Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners coming together in the spirit of reconciliation to find common solutions.**

KEY FACTS:

B.C. Residential Schools and Indian Hospitals:

For more than a century, approximately 150,000 Indigenous children were forced to attend one of 139 residential schools operated by federal government and church organizations. The 18 schools in B.C. were: Ahousaht, Alberni, Cariboo, Christie, Coqualeetza, Cranbrook, Kamloops, Kitimaat, Kuper Island, Lejac, Lower Post, Port Simpson, Lytton, Mission, Alert Bay, Sechelt, Squamish and Anahim Lake. The first opened in Mission (St. Mary's) in 1867; it was the final school to close in B.C. in 1984.

There were also three large Indian hospitals in Prince Rupert (Miller Bay), Nanaimo and Sardis (Coqualeetza). Children from B.C. were also taken out of the province to attend residential schools. There are additional federally funded and operated institutions in B.C. that are of significant historical interest and importance to First Nations. This includes day schools, dormitories, sanatoriums and smaller hospitals.

Created in 2008 as a result of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) had a mandate to listen to survivors, their families, communities and others affected by the residential school system and inform all Canadians about the residential school system and its legacy. The TRC documented that at least 3,200 children died at residential schools in B.C. (number is now likely significantly higher as additional records are accessed and reviewed), while an unknown number are missing.

In 2015, the TRC published its final report detailing the experiences and impacts of the residential school system, creating a historical record of its legacy and consequences. A three-day closing event was held from May 31 to June 3, 2015, and 2025 will mark the 10-year anniversary of the TRC's final report.

Provincial Response 2021-2024:

The Province takes its direction from the First Nations leading these investigations and continues to create opportunities for communities to come together to set collective direction on the response.

In June 2021, the establishment of the BC Residential School Response Fund committed \$12 million to support First Nations-led investigations at the sites of the 18 Indian Residential Schools and the three Indian Hospitals that operated in B.C. Since then, the federal and provincial governments have worked collaboratively to coordinate funding for site-specific activities.

The provincial funding is fully flexible, needs-based, and addresses gaps in federal funding. It supports a range of activities related to the search for missing children, including planning, training, research, mental health and wellness supports, and commemoration.

- First Nations that have been identified as lead communities can access up to \$475,000. Since September 2021, the Province has provided \$10 million to 20 First Nations and Tribal Councils

across B.C. There is now work underway on all 18 Indian Residential School sites in B.C and three Indian Hospital Sites.

- In September 2021, \$1.5 million was provided to Indigenous service providers to respond to the immediate wellness, cultural and mental health needs of Indigenous Peoples throughout B.C. This funding has been fully expended. The federal government has since provided additional funds to sustain these services on a province-wide basis.

In July 2021, the Province appointed two First Nations Liaisons (Charlene Belleau and Chief Lydia Hwitsum) to build trust-based relationships with First Nation leaders and work with federal and provincial governments to guide the response moving forward. Chief Hwitsum has since stepped away from her role as a liaison to focus on her leadership responsibilities with the Cowichan Tribes.

Since October 2021, the Province has hosted six provincial gatherings that bring together project leaders from the communities who are investigating Indian Residential School and Indian Hospital sites in B.C. They provide the opportunity to share promising practices and approaches for site research and searches.

In 2022, the Province provided funding of \$425,000 to the UBC Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre for work with the Royal BC Museum and BC Archives to improve the accessibility of residential school records in the possession of the provincial government. This includes the private collections of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the Sisters of St. Ann, who had a hand in operating 10 Indian Residential Schools in B.C.

In 2023, the provincial government passed legislation designating September 30 as a provincial statutory holiday to be observed annually as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. This was done in direct response to TRC Call to Action #80 and followed engagement with Indigenous communities and partners on how the Province should commemorate the history and legacy of the residential school system in B.C.

In June 2023, the Province worked with the University of British Columbia and the Musqueam Indian Band to deliver a 10-day training course on the use of GPR to locate unmarked graves on the grounds of former Indian Residential Schools and Indian Hospitals.

Findings throughout the province:

- In May 2021, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc (TteS) announced in a press release the "confirmation of the remains of 215 children who were students of the Kamloops Indian Residential School." Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc has since clarified that "In May 2021 with the assistance of a Ground Penetrating Radar, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc was able to narrow down the location of probable unmarked burial sites on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School" and that "investigators' findings to date are consistent with the presence of unmarked burials." A key focus of Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Le Estcwicwéy ("the Missing") project since the announcement has been the ongoing field investigations and archival research, consultation with communities who had students attend Kamloops Residential school, gathering survivors' statements and developing TteS protocols and policies.
 - On February 12, 2025, Parks Canada designated the former Kamloops Indian Residential School a national historic site. Many of the buildings at the site have been preserved and are currently used as a museum and as an education centre, including on Secwépemc language and culture. The designation makes it the fifth former residential school now recognized as a national historic site and the first in B.C. Canada recently started to recognize them as historic sites, with the first two recognized in 2020.
- In 2021, Penelakut (Kuper Island Industrial School), ʔaq'am (St. Eugene's near Cranbrook), and Snuneymuxw (Nanaimo Indian Hospital) disclosed publicly that ground penetrating radar (GPR) surveys of sites had been completed in past years or are ongoing.
 - In a June 2021 media statement, ʔaq'am clarified that preliminary results from the investigation found 182 potential unmarked graves within the ʔaq'am cemetery grounds, acknowledging that

ADVICE TO MINISTER

not all are those of residential school students. ʔaq'am stated that further GPR work may be done on the site. No additional details about the findings were disclosed.

- Williams Lake First Nation (WLFN) is conducting a multi-phase investigation into the deaths and disappearances of Indigenous children who attended St. Joseph's Mission (SJM) near Williams Lake between 1891 and 1981. There have been two public announcements since the beginning of the investigation in September 2021, with preliminary findings of 159 reflections on or near the site of SJM that indicate the potential presence of burials. In Fall 2024, WLFN released an Interim Report for the investigation and launched a website with additional resources for survivors.
- In February 2023, Tseshaht First Nation announced findings from the first phase of their research and survey of the site of the former Alberni Indian Residential School near Port Alberni. Archival research to date indicates that 67 students died at the Alberni Indian Residential School between 1900 and 1973, more than the 29 deaths documented by the TRC. As part of its announcement, Tseshaht First Nation released 26 Calls for Truth and Justice that focus on health, education, justice, infrastructure, training, research, survivor supports, commemoration and long-term funding.
- In April 2023, shishálh Nation announced findings from the first phase of their survey of sites associated with St. Augustine's Residential School (or Sechelt Residential School). Forty possible unmarked graves were located during this survey, which is unique in that much of the area historically associated with the school has been re-developed in recent decades.
- On September 21, 2023, the Xyólhmet ye Syéwíqwélh (Taking Care of Our Children) team, which is part of the Stó:lō Nation, provided an update on initial oral-historical, archival and geophysical findings from their broad-based and inclusive initiative that aims to investigate potential unmarked graves and missing children related to three former residential school sites within S'ólh Téméxw, St. Mary's, Coqualeetza and All Hallows institutions, as well as those associated with the Coqualeetza Indian Hospital. Through archival research, the research team confirmed a total of 158 deaths (96 children at the Coqualeetza hospital; 37 at Coqualeetza school; 20 at St. Mary's; and five at All Hallows School). Research is ongoing, and these numbers may change.
- On January 27, 2024, Snuneymuxw First Nation and Canada signed a reconciliation agreement that will allocate 80.09 hectares of land (the "Camp Nanaimo Lands on Te'tuxwtun") to be set aside as a reserve for the Nation, including land that was once the location of the Nanaimo Indian Hospital.
- On April 10, 2024, Ahousaht First Nation and the ʔahʔiihčp ʔukwíl ʔiqhmuut (Honouring Our Ancient Ones) project team shared knowledge gathered from their first phase of research and scanning with former students, families and the general public. Archival research, archaeological and remote sensing fieldwork as well as oral history gathering took place over the last three years in the search for missing children at two former residential school sites: Ahousaht Indian Residential School in Maaqtusiis (Flores Island) and Christie Indian Residential School (Meares Island). The team chose not to offer figures for the number of potential unmarked graves, noting that each figure is a child and the Nation would like to honour those children and their families.
- On November 30, 2024, Nadleh Whut'en announced that after nearly two years of geophysical surveys, that there are newly identified potential unmarked graves at Tseyaz Bunk'ut, which holds the former site of the Lejac Indian Residential School. A preliminary report on a ground penetrating radar and magnetometry survey has identified "23 markers" or geophysical signatures that have traits consistent with potential burial locations. The report was commissioned by the Guiding Team of the Nez Keh Hubuk'uznootah project, which means "Let's Look for our Children" in Dakelh. There will be further geophysical surveys conducted in consultation with survivors in the years to come.
- There is also a survey being conducted by the Squamish Nation (St. Paul's in North Vancouver).

In all cases, First Nations have been clear that these are preliminary findings and that further investigation is required. No First Nation in B.C. has proceeded with the excavation of a site for the purposes of recovering, identifying or repatriating ancestral remains at this time.

Saint Joseph's Mission (SJM) Indian Residential School Site – Property Acquisition:

The Province has maintained an active role in the investigation being led by WLFN on the site of the former SJM due to it being located on private property. WLFN requires the consent and continued cooperation of the property owners to access the site and conduct field studies. The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) has been facilitating dialogue between the affected parties to allow for continued access to the site and provide interim protections to priority areas on the property.

WLFN is the lead community for this investigation due to their proximity and historical relationship to the site. Their investigation team is comprised of technical, cultural and legal advisors. In 2023, MIRR provided WLFN with \$800,000 to purchase a 13.7-acre property where the residential school and staff and student residences were historically located. This secures permanent site access and provides the opportunity for former students and their families to visit the site for cultural, spiritual, ceremonial or other commemorative purposes on an ongoing basis.

WLFN identified approximately 700 hectares of land as being of interest in the search for unmarked student graves, including the school site, outbuildings, and a ranch that was owned by the Catholic church entity that operated the school. The area covers approximately 15 privately owned agricultural parcels. Since August 2021, a small portion of this area overlapping two private land parcels has been the focus of a preliminary geophysical survey. The site survey is supplemented by archival research and interviews with former students and their families.

MOU — Williams Lake First Nation:

On June 3, 2024, the Province (including the BC Coroners Service), the RCMP and WLFN signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that sets out shared principles and processes to guide future phases of the investigation, including processes related to the potential recovery, identification and repatriation of remains believed to be interred on or near SJM. Signatories of the MOU are WLFN, the BC Coroners Service, MIRR, the RCMP, the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, and the Ministry of Forests Archaeology Branch. At present, WLFN has no plans to excavate.

Special Interlocuter and Interim Report:

On June 8, 2022, Kimberly Murray was appointed Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites associated with Indian Residential Schools. The Special Interlocutor's mandate was carried out from June 14, 2022 to October 29, 2024.

On June 16, 2023, Murray released an Interim Report, "Sacred Responsibility: Searching for the Missing Children and Unmarked Burials." The report names common concerns that Survivors, Indigenous families, and communities have identified as they search for and recover missing children and unmarked burials, including the impacts that residential school denialism has had on survivors. The report also details the Independent Special Interlocutor's 48 Findings based on these common concerns.

In July 2024, Murray released a historical report titled "Sites of Truth, Sites of Conscience: Unmarked Burials and Mass Graves of Missing and Disappeared Indigenous Children in Canada." This report is meant as a companion to the TRC's report on missing children and unmarked burials, providing evidence such as historical records and images with a goal of countering denialism.

On October 29, 2024, Murray officially presented her Final Report and the Indigenous-led Reparations Framework for Missing and Disappeared Children and Unmarked Burials associated with Indian Residential Schools to Survivors and the federal Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, at the 7th National Gathering on Unmarked Burials. This report results from two years of intensive engagement with Survivors and Indigenous communities across the country. It marks a crucial step in pursuing justice for the affected families. The official document identifies the legal, moral and ethical obligations that Canada must fulfill to address the legislative and structural gaps that exist in identifying, protecting and commemorating missing and disappeared children and their burials.

Federal Response 2024:

ADVICE TO MINISTER

In the 2024 federal budget, announced on April 16, 2024, there were allocations provided to address the legacy of residential schools:

- \$91 million over two years, starting in 2024-25, to Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) to increase the support provided to communities to document, locate and memorialize burial sites at former residential schools.
- \$5 million over three years, starting in 2025-26, to CIRNAC to establish a program to combat residential school denialism.

Federal Funding Caps:

In July 2024, several First Nations communities and organizations, including the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, criticized proposed federal funding cuts for residential school investigations. This negative reaction was widely covered by Canadian media outlets. On August 16, 2024, CIRNAC issued a statement that the federal government is lifting the funding cap and removing planned restrictions.

Proposed Settlement – Indian Hospitals Class Action:

On March 6, 2025, CIRNAC and Ann Cecile Hardy, court-appointed representative plaintiff, jointly announced that a proposed Settlement Agreement has been reached in the Federal Indian Hospitals (Hardy) class action.

Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information; Intergovernmental Communications

Renaming Requests in Municipalities:

In November 2024, Kitimat council voted down the Haisla Nation's request to rename two streets honouring missionaries George Anderson and George Raley, both associated with residential school history. The motion, which proposed new names reflecting Haisla values, was defeated 4-3, with Mayor Phil Germuth and councillors Mario Feldhoff, Graham Pitzel, and Edwin Empanado voting against it.

"The potential negative effect on all the great progress we had made with the Haisla Nation is a great concern," Germuth said to the Kitimat Northern Sentinel. While acknowledging the harm caused by the missionaries, Germuth said he felt compelled to reject the motion because it involved "changing history" and emphasized the need for a thorough understanding of the historical figures before making such a significant decision.

In May 2021, the Tla'amin Nation formally initiated a request to remove the name "Powell" from the city of Powell River, as part of a commitment to reconciliation, and in light of the increasing social awareness of the truths of colonialism and the harmful legacy the actions of Israel Powell has had and continues to have on Tla'amin and non-Tla'amin people alike. Israel Powell served as Superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Province from 1872 to 1889. During his tenure, he opened two residential schools in B.C. and encouraged the creation of a funding structure that incentivized high enrollment. In 2022, public engagement on the name change began and remains ongoing amidst high tensions, involving both officials from the city and Tla'amin Nation elected officials and residents.

Media Interest:

There has been significant media interest surrounding public announcements in 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024.

In July 2024, the federal funding cuts received national coverage, with substantial criticism aimed at the federal government, including from Kimberly Murray. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation also issued a press release on July 18: "[Federal Government imposes arbitrary cap on funding for residential school searches.](#)"

On July 4, 2024, T̓silhqot'in National Government (TNG) issued a [press release](#) calling on the Province, RCMP, and WLFN to recognize the need for a direct role for T̓silhqot'in leadership and people in the investigations at SJM. It stated "We will do whatever we must to protect our kids, including legal action, if the status quo in the current MOU continues. Nothing will happen without T̓silhqot'in consent on this matter." On July 8, a [Williams Lake Tribune article](#) referenced the TNG press release, with TNG Tribal Chair and Chief Joe Alphonse saying that "TNG learned about the MOU through the media, and having just one First Nation have its say for all the children who went there is absolutely wrong and very disrespectful." In response, MIRR provided a statement that was included in the article and a CBC article, which mentioned the MOU includes a commitment by WLFN to continue to update and engage with the Survivors and their families as well as the communities whose members attended SJM, including the Stl'atl'imx, Secwépemc, Dakelh, and T̓silhqot'in Nations, to ensure that their views and perspectives will continue to inform the investigation.

In March-April 2024, media widely covered the calls for Quesnel mayor Ron Paull to resign after revelations his wife had been handing out a book titled *Grave Error: How the Media Misled Us (and the Truth about Residential Schools)*.

In late March 2024, there was wide provincial coverage on a sacred covenant signed between Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver to formalize a commitment to truth and reconciliation, including honouring and memorializing residential school students, sharing historical records and retaining scientific experts available to support the band at its direction. The Globe and Mail published an article "No timeline on residential school excavation, chief says", which covered the covenant signing and included that Kukpi7 (Chief) Rosanne Casimir told reporters at a joint press conference with the Catholic Archbishop of Vancouver her First Nation is still working with survivors of the Kamloops Indian Residential School to catalogue their oral histories, and with this work still ongoing, there was no timetable for excavation.

The SJM property acquisition announcement was covered widely by regional and provincial media. Though coverage was largely positive, a September 5, 2023 [Williams Lake Tribune article](#) quoted TNG Tribal Chair and Chief Joe Alphonse, who said that residential schools in Canada are a special interest zone for all First Nations and he was angered by the fact the province aided in the WLFN purchase of the SJM site. "For them to go ahead and give this to WLFN, they are just contributing to the trauma of First Nations through [more] interference," Alphonse said.

The Special Interlocutor's Interim Report garnered national and provincial media coverage after its release on June 16, 2023.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

A key focus of media reporting in late 2021 and early 2022 was the historical role of the Catholic church in the administration of the residential school system throughout Canada. This story has been less of a focus since the papal visit to Canada in July 2022.

Communications Director responsible: Leanne Ritchie

Responsible program: ADM Julia Iwama

Prepared by: Kaitlyn Engholm

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Ministry of Indigenous Relations & Reconciliation

Date: Nov. 6, 2024

Minister Responsible: Hon. Christine Boyle

Gaming Revenue Sharing

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- **Indigenous governments – like all governments – are accountable to their citizens and require sources of revenues to fund priorities like community infrastructure, services for families, as well as the staff to deliver these things.**
- **In 2020, the Province reached a 25-year revenue-sharing agreement with First Nations in B.C., providing First Nations a 7% share in provincial gaming revenues.**
- **In total, more than \$534 million has been shared with First Nations for the construction of new housing and community buildings, supporting for families and new parents, programs to preserve and strengthen Indigenous languages, mental health services, economic development, and much more.**
- **In April 2022, the Province provided a one-time \$74 million dollar grant to First Nations to mitigate the loss of revenues during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

KEY FACTS:

In September 2020, the Province and First Nations Leadership Council finalized a 25-year arrangement to share provincial gaming revenue with B.C. First Nations. This arrangement includes amendments to the Gaming Control Act to establish a 7% entitlement of British Columbia Lottery Corporation (BCLC) net income to First Nations and an additional seat for a First Nations' appointed director on BCLC's board of directors, currently held by Leah George-Wilson. A Long-Term Revenue Sharing Agreement was signed, which activates the entitlement and annual flow of revenues through the First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing Limited Partnership.

The partnership is the entity created by First Nations to receive, manage and distribute gaming revenues to First Nations governments. It has established compliance and reporting requirements on the use of funds. All First Nations communities in B.C. are eligible to join the partnership to access funding; eligible Nations include bands under the federal Indian Act, modern treaty First Nations and defined non-treaty self-governing Nations.

Funds may be used under six categories: health and wellness; infrastructure, safety, transportation, and housing; economic and business development; education, language, culture and training; community development and environmental protection; and capacity building, fiscal management and governance. All funds must be used for approved community purposes and direct distribution of gaming revenue to individuals is not permitted.

Annual payments are based on the estimated BCLC net income for that fiscal year, with any overpayments deducted from future year payments, or a top-up provided in the case of an underpayment for that fiscal year. To date, the Province has transferred \$534 million in gaming revenue-sharing payments to First Nations. In 2021/2022, the Province also issued an additional one-time payment of \$74 million to the Partnership as an Economic Recovery Grant to mitigate the loss of First Nations gaming revenues due to the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on gaming revenues and successive fires and floods. Approximately \$3 billion in revenues is expected to be shared by the end of the agreement.

The revenue sharing total for fiscal year 2023/2024 was \$107,519,137.

Media Interest: There has been media interest in revenue sharing with First Nations over the past few years, usually around announcements (forestry April 2022, recovery grant April 2022, gaming agreement Sept. 2020). The majority of media coverage has been positive.

Communications Director responsible: Leanne Ritchie
Responsible program: ADM Julia Iwama
Prepared by: Kim Hudson

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and
Reconciliation

Date: April 17, 2025

Minister Responsible: Hon. Christine Boyle

Haida litigation

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The Haida Title Lands Agreement and the related Haida Nation Recognition Amendment Act formally recognize the Haida Nation's Aboriginal title to the land of Haida Gwaii as defined in the Haida Title Lands Agreement.
- It is a foundational step in B.C.'s reconciliation pathway with the Haida Nation.
- The legislation brings into effect the commitments made by B.C. in the Haida Title Lands Agreement, a first-of-its-kind negotiated agreement between the Haida Nation and B.C.
- The legislation supports the agreement's implementation approach, which provides for B.C. and the Haida Nation to reconcile jurisdictions and laws over time.
- It also protects and maintains private property rights and existing government services and infrastructure in Haida Gwaii.
- Over the next several years, the Council of the Haida Nation and B.C. will work together and negotiate how provincial and Haida Nation laws can work together.
- Local governments, residents and others will have opportunities to have input in the discussions.
- During the process of reconciling jurisdictions and laws, land and resource decisions will continue to be made under B.C. laws and through existing processes.

If asked: Didn't the Haida Nation Recognition Amendment Act and the Haida Title Lands Agreement resolve the litigation?

- The Haida Title Lands Agreement and the legislation may help to resolve a part of the litigation with the Haida Nation.
- However, at this time, the Haida Nation has decided to pursue litigation along with negotiations, and B.C. respects that decision.

- **B.C. and the Council of the Haida Nation are currently in discussions, and B.C. remains open to exploring a complete negotiated resolution with the Haida Nation.**
- **The provincial agreement and legislation provide certainty for private property rights and existing government services on Haida Gwaii, and a process for B.C. and the Haida Nation to reconcile jurisdictions and laws, which could be difficult to achieve through court order.**

If asked: What happens on Haida Gwaii if the court recognizes Haida Aboriginal title?

- **The agreement and related legislation were designed to limit the potential impact and uncertainty that a court decision might have on the residents of Haida Gwaii.**
- **B.C. remains open to exploring a complete negotiated resolution with the Haida Nation.**
- **We respect the Haida Nation's decision to pursue litigation along with negotiations.**
- **At this time, I cannot further discuss matters before the courts.**

KEY FACTS:

Advice/Recommendations; Intergovernmental Communications; Legal Information

ADVICE TO MINISTER

Advice/Recommendations; Intergovernmental Communications; Legal Information

Media Interest

During the passing of the legislation and the finalizing of the HTLA, media articles and opinion pieces – both positive and critical – ran in outlets throughout Canada. Media coverage has focused on the agreement rather than the litigation.

Communications Director responsible: Leanne Ritchie

Responsible program: ADM Carolyn Kamper, Chris Robb, AG lawyer

Prepared by: Julian Paquette

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

Progress on Economic Reconciliation

SPEAKING POINTS

- The Provincial government is committed to economic reconciliation by improving the participation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in the economy.
- We must work in partnership to identify shared goals, strategic outcomes, and progress towards economic reconciliation.
- We rely on the Declaration Act as a legal and policy framework to guide our efforts in advancing economic reconciliation by working in partnership with Indigenous peoples on priorities that strengthen our provincial economy.
- Our government has achieved numerous successes in the broad and diverse space of economic reconciliation, and I would like to highlight a few examples which demonstrate our progress in this area:
 - In the Cariboo region, BC has helped Nations purchase ranches; this was realised through the Northern Secwēpemc (*sec-wep-emc*) te Qelmūcw (*KELL-mook*) Treaty with the Secwepemc and the Tsilhqot'in (*sill-ko-teen*) Gwets'en Nilt'i (*GWET-sen NEEL-ti*) Pathways Agreement.
 - We're finalizing the 2020 Snuneymuxw (*snue-ney-mowck*) Land Transfer Agreement, transferring 3,100 ha of Crown forest land to the Nation. Harvesting the land contributes to membership employment, the local forest economy, and secondary business opportunities (i.e., trucking).
 - Land transfer to Ts'uubaa-asatx (*suu-baa-saht*) First Nation supports economic diversification in the Cowichan Valley through the Nation's commercial and industrial development of the site.
 - From 2017-2019 the Province signed Coastal Fund, Pipeline and Facilities Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) Benefits agreements with Coastal First Nations, Metlakatla, Lax Kw'alaams, Kitselas, Kitsumkalum, Gitxaala, and Gitga'at First Nations sharing financial and other benefits from LNG developments. The funding provides annual sustainable funding for these Nations to address socio-economic community interests.
 - In Fall 2023, Kitselas and Kitsumkalum received \$5M each in economic development funding as an advance on reconciliation prior to tri-partite initialing of their respective treaties. On the path to comprehensive treaties, these Nations have also received early land transfers to support economic development such as gravel pits and to support associate LNG infrastructure development in the Terrace area.
 - In the northeast, we have transferred lands as a pathway to economic reconciliation and entered revenue sharing agreements with Treaty 8.

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

- **Economic reconciliation requires First Nations to have meaningful involvement and ownership in economic projects. One example of strong partnership is the Ministry of Finance's leadership on a First Nation Equity Financing Project, as announced in Budget 2024.**
- **Supporting equity participation of First Nations in new and expansion projects in the energy, natural resources and related sectors like aquaculture, agriculture and tourism brings economic growth, jobs, new revenues and other benefits to First Nations and British Columbia.**
- **Our commitment to economic reconciliation is also carried out in the Declaration Act Action Plan to include 14 actions with an economic-specific focus and other actions such as co-developing long-term agreements, establishing new fiscal relations and modernizing legislation.**
- **As part of our commitment to co-developing new fiscal frameworks with First Nations, we have shared more than half billion dollars in gaming revenue with First Nations since 2022 through our long-term gaming revenue sharing arrangement. We also doubled First Nation forestry revenue rates as we continue to co-develop a forestry revenue-sharing model with First Nations.**
- **Partnerships with First Nations are crucial in our response to the recent economic threat facing the BC economy. This is why the Premier with the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation have established a provincial trade and economic security taskforce that brings together the business community, industry, labour, and First Nations leadership to develop measures that grow and protect our provincial economy.**
- **We are also improving systems and processes in the public service that will help fast-track approvals and permits for 18 energy and natural resource projects, many of which are owned by First Nations or have an Indigenous equity component. These projects will support investment and growth in BC's economy in the face of tariffs.**

BACKGROUND

- MIRR staff provide guidance and advice to government on economic sector work that advances First Nations, Métis, and Inuit interests and meets the needs of the Declaration Act.
- MIRR also advances economic reconciliation through the co-development of new fiscal frameworks and the inclusion of economic development as a vital component of treaty agreements, comprehensive reconciliation agreements, foundation agreements and more developed with First Nations.
- The Supreme Court of Canada in its decision in the case of *Delgamuukw vs. British Columbia* held that aboriginal title has an "inescapable economic component."

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

Although BC has not defined Economic Reconciliation, it upholds this decision by recognizing that a distinctions-based approach is required to advance its reconciliation commitments involving economic priorities with rights-holders.

- Of the 89 actions under the Declaration Act Action Plan, 14 target economic aspects designed to address disparities and support the economic well-being of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis in BC.
- Ten long term agreements recognizing and supporting reconciliation, self-determination, decision-making, and economic independence have resulted from DAAP Action 1.02 – Shift from Short-Term to Long-term Agreements.
- MIRR's Negotiations and Regional Operations Division leads the negotiation of long-term reconciliation and treaty agreements with First Nations and is poised to conclude three comprehensive treaty agreements. On March 8th and April 10th, 2025 respectively, K'omoks and Kitselas First Nations voted in favour of implementing their Treaties; Kitsumkalum will likely vote in the fall. Comprehensive tri-partite treaties recognizing the rights and governance structures of Nations result in the transfer of lands and funds that support their self-determined economic priorities.

Primary Contact

Thérèse Nicholson

Indigenous Economic Development

Cell: Government

ADM Responsible

Ann Marie Sam

Reconciliation Transformation and Strategies Division

Cell: Government

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and
Reconciliation
Date: February 7, 2025
Minister Responsible: Hon. Christine Boyle

Kwkwetlem Litigation and

Advice/Recommendations; Cabinet Confidences;
Intergovernmental Communications

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- In 2016, kwikwəłəm [kwee-kwet-lum] First Nation filed a lawsuit against British Columbia, Metro Vancouver Regional District, BC Housing, and the City of Port Coquitlam regarding kwikwəłəm's claim of Aboriginal Title and Rights in part of kwikwəłəm's territory.
- The content of the negotiations is subject to settlement privilege.
- Our goal is to reach a settlement that will address kwikwəłəm's interests and create benefits for all British Columbians, including an approach to shaping the future of səmiq'wə?elə [Suh-mEE-kwuh EL-uh]
- This is highly complex, sensitive work that takes time. Our hope is that we can come to an understanding soon.
- As a defendant in the claim, the Province cannot comment on ongoing litigation.

Advice/Recommendations; Cabinet Confidences; Intergovernmental
Communications: Legal Information

If pressed on court proceedings:

- Kwkwetlem First Nation filed a civil claim in 2016 seeking clarification of its Aboriginal title from the court.
- As a defendant in the claim, the Province cannot comment on ongoing litigation.

KEY FACTS:

Advice/Recommendations; Intergovernmental Communications; Legal Information

KFN's claim notes that not having access to these lands has limited Kwkwetlem members' abilities to reconnect to their ancestral territory and has been a barrier to economic development opportunities for the Nation.

In the meantime, government is working with Kwikwetlem to provide more clarity on future plans for səmiqʷəʔelə, including a master planning process to use as a blueprint for future development of the site.

BACKGROUND:

Advice/Recommendations; Intergovernmental Communications

In 2021, Kwikwetlem and BC Housing signed a Partnership Agreement affirming a reconciliation-based approach to working together on the vision for the səmiqʷəʔelə site. The Province and Kwikwetlem jointly changed the name of the “Riverview” site to səmiqʷəʔelə and launched a Master Planning Process for its redevelopment.

In 2016, Kwikwetlem filed a civil claim, seeking recognition of its rights over lands held by the defendant parties including the səmiqʷəʔelə site managed by BC Housing.

Kwikwetlem knowledge keepers (Elders) have been on record praising the Province for halting any future plans for the site.

Media Interest: Media outlets are interested in the future of the Riverview psychiatric hospital grounds in Coquitlam.

According to an article from CTV: “Despite years of consultation, announcements, and meetings, BC Housing has nothing to show taxpayers or people desperate for access to intense mental health and addiction treatment.”

səmiqʷəʔelə was mentioned frequently during the 2024 provincial election in discussions about mental health facilities and involuntary care, with mental health treatment options seen as provincial priority. Political figures, including Vancouver Mayor Ken Sim, called for a modernized version of the former Riverview Hospital to be opened. The BC Conservatives vowed to redevelop it as part of their platform.

In September 2024, the Province announced new secure care treatment facilities for mental illness and addiction elsewhere. The provincial news release clarified that the səmiqʷəʔelə site was subject to an ongoing title claim from KFN and noted a settlement would include plans for developing the site.

Audio pronunciation: səmiqʷəʔelə (Riverview) by Kwikwetlem First Nation in kwikʷəʔəm Pronunciation Guide playlist on SoundCloud

Communications Director responsible: Leanne Ritchie
Responsible program: Carolyn Kamper (ADM)
Prepared by: Tegwyn Hughes

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

Prepared in coordination with the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

Crown Land Reconciliation - First Nation Land Transfers

SPEAKING POINTS

- **My mandate letter specifically directs me to work with the Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) on approaches to accelerate agreed-upon land transfers that enhance First Nation community and economic development**
- **Lands are an essential component of reconciliation, and we recognize the need to implement BC's land ownership commitments to First Nations in an efficient way and our work in partnership with the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship is showing results.**
- **WLRS has been successful in expediting implementation of land agreements as partner to MIRR and First Nations, with an average time of 8 months for implementation resulting in a 10-fold increase in land transfers, an increase of 1000%.**

Additional response points (if needed):

- **WLRS holds legislation used to establish First Nation ownership of former provincial Crown lands and land return staff, since a 2023 natural resource ministry re-structure.**
- **As a result, implementation of land-based reconciliation is now led by WLRS through the First Nation Land Transfers branch.**

BACKGROUND

- Over 95% of land in BC is provincial Crown land, the majority of which is subject to inherent Aboriginal rights and title.
- Negotiated approaches to title (e.g. Treaty or Comprehensive Reconciliation Agreements) are less costly and provide more certainty than court declarations or threat of litigation. The negotiation of reconciliation agreements that include land ownership is led by MIRR with the implementation actioned by WLRS.
- Given the importance of land in reconciliation, land ownership commitments have increased significantly over the past several years, with a nearly 500% increase in committed lands for transfer between 2021 and 2023.
- Since December 2023, efficiencies have been realized by the natural resource restructure and the centralization of land return resources, including expedited ministerial order timelines in WLRS resulting in an increase of land transfers.
- These changes along with partnership approaches with First Nations have contributed to a ten-fold increase, or 1000% increase, in completed land transfers

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

Prepared in coordination with the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

this year, with land returns to 16 First Nations concluded in fee simple, and three First Nations working with Canada to add lands transferred from B.C. to their reserves.

- Agreements with large land quantum in implementation include the Lake Babine Foundation Agreement, Cheslatta Settlement Agreement, and Treaty Land Entitlement.
- Treaty lands are vested through dedicated legislation, while land returns and transfers to Canada for addition to reserve are completed through existing provincial legislation including the *Land Act*, the *Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing Act*, and the *Land Title Act*.
- Budget 2025 transferred \$400K to WLRS from MIRR for First Nation Land Transfers operations. The majority of funding for land-based reconciliation agreements is generally funded through MIRR-managed funding sources.
- Timely access to implementation funding is crucial to meeting land transfer targets for committed agreements.
- An estimated \$4.602M in Budget 2026 is targeted for funding for land implementation costs by WLRS, including for land survey costs, subject to planning and approvals with MIRR.

WLRS Primary Contact

Ashlyn Schwaiger
Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship
Cell: (250) 380-8372

ADM Responsible

Carolyn Kamper
Negotiations and Regional Operations Division
Cell: (250) 208-9482

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Date: Jan. 7, 2024

Minister Responsible: Hon. Christine Boyle

Métis Nation BC

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

Relationship with MNBC:

- We continue to advance reconciliation efforts with Métis people, including with Metis Nation BC, through our joint working table as well as engagement with different Ministries from across government.

The Distinctions-based Approach (DBA) Primer:

- The Province recognizes the diversity of Indigenous Peoples – First Nations, Métis and Inuit – in B.C.
- The Distinctions-based Approach Primer was created to assist the provincial government in building a better understanding of the legal basis for, and core elements of, a distinctions-based approach in all of its relations with First Nations, Métis and Inuit in B.C.
- We are aware of MNBC's concerns with the Primer and our work together is ongoing.
- The Primer assists public servants in making decisions that are grounded in a consistent understanding of the Constitution Act, 1982; the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act; treaties; and relevant court decisions.
- The Primer is not meant to define the full scope of what it means to engage in a distinctions-based way and is not complete description of the relationships the Province has with Métis.

If asked about the “Métis Social Sector Rights – DBA Interim Measure” position paper submitted by MNBC:

- The B.C. government is currently working on a response to a position paper that we received from MNBC.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

KEY FACTS:

On Dec. 5, 2023, the Province released a distinction-based approach primer (the Primer) document to assist B.C. public servants in understanding the current legal basis and core elements of a distinctions-based approach in all relations with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples.^{Intergovernmental Communications}

Intergovernmental Communications

There has been tension between some First Nations' leaders and organizations and MNBC. The Primer underwent a review by other Indigenous partners including the Alliance of BC Modern Treaty Nations (ABCMTN) and First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC).

Advice/Recommendations

Advice/Recommendations

. MIRR will work in consultation and cooperation with the First Nations Leadership Council, the Alliance of BC Modern Treaty Nations and Métis Nation BC.

Additional key facts:

On September 6, 2024, MNBC submitted a position paper titled 'Metis Social Sector Rights – DBA Interim Measure', to the B.C. government with assertions of Sec 35 rights and that MNBC is the rights holding collective. The paper focuses on non-site-specific Métis social sector rights in B.C. The Province is working on a response to the paper, which does not acknowledge the rights assertions but will be guided by the DBA legal primer.

On September 8, 2024, MNBC's election results included Walter Mineault as president and Melanie Allard as vice-president. President Mineault previously served as MNBC vice-president. On Dec. 2, 2024, President Mineault sent Premier Eby a letter notifying him of MNBC's departure from the Métis National Council (MNC). MNBC claims it has less voting power than the other member provinces (Alberta and Ontario) and there is an unwillingness to implement a more equitable funding model. President Mineault stated that MNBC now looks forward to strengthening its partnership with Canada through a bilateral relationship and continuing to work towards a reconciliation agreement with B.C. under the new B.C.-Métis Relations Table.

In August 2024, a letter came through the MIRR correspondence unit from a Métis citizen concerned that the School Amendment Act (bill 40 – passed in April 2024) excludes Métis people from Indigenous Education Councils (IECs) and that MNBC was not sufficiently consulted on the bill. IECs work with local school boards for better outcomes for Indigenous students. IECs are now required for every B.C. board of education and local First Nations must receive invites to the IEC. Districts are also required to consider their local context and invite additional members who can represent views of Indigenous people in the area, including other First Nations, Métis or Inuit student advocates. This letter was part of a larger MNBC campaign. ECC continues to have regular meetings with MNBC to discuss issues of interest.

On March 20, 2024, former MNBC President Lissa Dawn Smith sent the B.C. government a letter expressing concern about the Métis Justice Strategy that was set to go to Cabinet. MNBC was most concerned with new references to the DBA Primer and also to removed references to MNBC in multiple places. With support from the Attorney General, the references to the DBA Primer were removed and an affirmation made of the partnership between MNBC and the Province in moving the strategy forward. MNBC announced this in early October 2024.

Background:

The Province's relationship with MNBC is evolving, moving to a whole of government approach and engagement with MNBC is ongoing.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

Highlights in recent years:

- In February 2023, following the release of the provincial budget, MNBC issued a news release that called for a continued shift to a distinctions-based approach. The release highlighted that MNBC has been working with B.C. Government in a whole-of-government approach to create a reconciliation agreement that reflects the Declaration Act Action Plan's distinctions-based commitments.
- Following the release of Budget 2022, MNBC issued a news release criticizing the lack of funding for Métis people and MNBC. In March 2022, the B.C. Government released the Declaration Act Action Plan and MNBC released a generally positive news release.
- In late 2021, MNBC had a change in leadership that resulted in a shift in the tone of the organization. Under previous leadership, MNBC released a report in October 2020, A Tale of Two Nations: Highlighting the Inequities of Treatment of the Métis in B.C. – which has since been retracted by MNBC. The report noted MNBC feels left out of the reconciliation process.
- On October 27, 2021, the Province and MNBC signed a Letter of Intent that sets up the process to deepen the Province's understanding and integration of MNBC's priorities across government. MIRR and MNBC have initiated a BC-MNBC Working Table as a hub for engagement with MNBC and government to formalize dialogue and integrate engagement on MNBC priorities across all of government.

In 2024/25, the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is providing the following supports to Métis Nation British Columbia:

- \$400,000 to support their core capacity.
- \$60,000 to support their work with the Unified Aboriginal Youth Collective.
- \$750,000 negotiations support for the BC-Métis Relations Table to develop a reconciliation agreement as identified under the Letter of Intent.
- \$2.0M for Ending Gender-Based Violence (flow through funding from Canada)

MNBC is a political organization representing 39 Métis chartered communities in B.C. and is the recognized organization representing Métis by the provincial and federal governments. According to Stats Canada's 2021 Census, 25,580 people reported being registered with MNBC and living in B.C.

MNBC and the federal government

In 2022, MNBC started a Judicial Review against the Indigenous Services Canada decision that MNBC does not meet the requirements to be considered an Indigenous Governing Body under the federal legislation, Bill C-92. Without status as an Indigenous Governing Body, MNBC cannot access Bill C-92 capacity funding which would enable MNBC to explore readiness to exercise jurisdiction over the design and delivery of Métis children and family programs and services in B.C. Canada has recently indicated that MNBC requested to temporarily suspend the judicial review. In early Dec. 2024, MNBC posted on social media announcing that they signed the MNBC Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Agreement with Canada. MNBC described this as marking another step forward in creating culturally rooted and responsive early learning programs for Métis children and their families.

Media Interest:

MNBC has had a small amount of media coverage related to its response to the UBCIC resolution (June 2023) denouncing Métis colonialism in B.C. as well as to its legal challenge following a federal decision to not qualify MNBC as an Indigenous governing body.

Communications Director responsible: Leanne Ritchie

Responsible program: ADM Jennifer Melles

Prepared by: Julian Paquette

Key Messages

MNBC Budget response

March 2025

- **We have and will continue to work with Métis Nation BC as a political organization and partner, as they represent the interests of an Indigenous people in Canada**
- **Between 2018 and 2022, funding for MNBC from across government grew from \$3.5 million to more than \$20 million for programs that related to education, child welfare, health, justice and community safety and these funding levels continue.**
- **In 2024/25, the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is providing the following supports to Métis Nation British Columbia:**
 - **\$400,000 to support their core capacity.**
 - **\$60,000 to support their work with the Unified Aboriginal Youth Collective.**
 - **\$750,000 negotiations support for the BC-Métis Relations Table to develop a reconciliation agreement as identified under the Letter of Intent.**
 - **And \$2.0M for Ending Gender-Based Violence (with support from Canada)**
- **We are currently working on a response to the position paper that we received from MNBC on funding.**
- **We continue to advance reconciliation efforts with Métis people through our joint working table as well as engagement with different Ministries from across government.**

If pressed:

- **The Province and Métis Nation British Columbia are working together towards a new partnership that supports Métis People and includes self-determination through a “whole of government” approach.**

- **In late 2021, the Province and Métis Nation British Columbia signed a Letter of Intent. This is an opportunity to phase out our previous agreement – called the Métis Nation Relationship Accord II and work towards a modern agreement together.**
- **We have a Working Table where we are working towards increased collaboration, accountability, and cross-government engagement.**
- **As part of this work, we are developing shared priorities, reviewing current funding and future needs.**
- **I appreciate MNBC’s commitment to continuing to build on our relationship to achieve better outcomes for Métis people.**
- **There are many new and expanded programs from government available to Métis people, including new supports in childcare, justice, digital connectivity and health care.**

Background: Following the introduction of Budget 2025/26, MNBC issued a press release criticizing government.

“MNBC’s budget request asked for \$25.8 million to support Métis specific social programs and services such as Métis child welfare, education, as well as helping to address the urgent need of mental health and harm reduction resources in Métis Chartered Communities. This modest Budget 2025 request was made in recognition of the current economic climate. Yet, economic measures, like the US tariffs, disproportionately impact vulnerable communities like Métis, First Nation, and urban Indigenous peoples and communities. Budget 2025 does little to support vulnerable communities through this trade war. Budget 2025 also falls well short of the commitments made in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and our submission to meet these Métis specific needs.”

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

Land and Resource Funding for Modern Treaty Nations

SPEAKING POINTS

- **By working together, we are creating new pathways for Modern Treaty Nations to meaningfully exercise their rights and responsibilities to care for their people and the land.**
- **Our new, co-developed funding model will support greater capacity for the land and resource management functions of Modern Treaty Nations. This will help Modern Treaty Nations to implement their existing treaty rights, which will help provide greater certainty on decisions that benefit communities and the economy.**
- **Modern treaties encourage investment, create jobs, expand economic development and support social well-being for communities. Established modern treaties have resulted in 8.8% higher average wages for people in their regions and investment of billions of dollars in local communities and their economies.**

BACKGROUND

Collaborative Fiscal Process

- Since 2019, the Province has been undertaking a collaborative process with Modern Treaty Nations (MTNs) to develop new fiscal arrangements under treaty, consistent with the Province's broader commitment to co-develop a new fiscal relationship with Indigenous Peoples.
- The commitment to MTNs is further reflected in the Shared Priorities Framework and the Declaration Act Action Plan (Action 4.49)

Land and Resource Management Funding

- In late 2023, as the first outcome of this work, the parties finalized a new policy to guide negotiation of core funding for MTNs' land and resource management functions. The policy provides funding to implement existing treaty rights, which were negotiated in the treaties themselves but have not been funded to date.
- Core funding amounts range from about \$800,000 to \$1.9 million per MTN, based on territory size.
- The new core funding supports MTNs in establishing a dedicated land and resource management department that can effectively partner with the Province to fulfill treaty rights and obligations on Crown lands within MTN territories. Canada is responsible for funding land and resource management of treaty settlement lands.
- The new model allows MTNs to allocate the core funding to their specific land and resource priorities, including engaging with the Province on land-use

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

authorizations and decisions; participating in land use planning; gathering land and resource management data; and undertaking stewardship activities.

- The new policy was announced in July 2024. The Province and MTNs subsequently negotiated amendments to treaty fiscal agreements to begin implementing the core funding.

Next Steps

- Initially, the Province was only able to provide core funding for up to three fiscal years. Through Budget 2025, the Province has rolled the core funding into the MIRR base budget, which will allow the parties to amend the treaty fiscal agreements to make the funding permanent.
- The significant diversity between MTNs means the core funding is unlikely to fully meet MTN expenditure needs in all cases. The Province and MTNs are co-developing a data-driven evaluation framework to identify instances where incremental Provincial funding may be appropriate.
- The Province is also working collaboratively with MTNs to clarify where the core land and resource funding will serve as the primary source of Provincial capacity funding.
- In addition to implementing the new core funding with existing MTNs, the Province will also be tabling the new model at advanced treaty negotiation tables.

Primary Contact

CN Ricardo Toledo
Fiscal Branch
Cell: Government
Financial

ADM Responsible

ADM Julia Iwama
Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives Division
Cell: Government
Financial

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

Attainable Housing Initiative with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations

SPEAKING POINTS

- **This initiative shows how – by working in partnership with First Nations – our government is creating tangible solutions for people in one of the country's least affordable markets.**
- **Vancouver's housing crisis was decades in the making, and it will not be solved overnight – but this initiative is a great example of the innovative, path-breaking work our government is doing to create homes that people can afford.**
- **This model is used successfully in other jurisdictions, and when we demonstrate how it can work here, it could attract further investment and generate more attainable housing across BC.**
- **We are in a difficult and uncertain economic time. Expansion of the model will depend on future budget decisions, and it may look different in different communities.**
- **Today we're proud to be partnering with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations to create up to 2,846 homes for middle income families at the Heather Lands and demonstrate how this model can make the dream of home ownership a reality for people who are currently shut out of the market.**

BACKGROUND

- The Heather Lands property is 8.5 hectares (21 acres) and located on Heather Street between West 33rd Avenue and West 37th Avenue in Vancouver. The property is owned by the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh (MST) Nations.
- Under the Attainable Housing Initiative (AHI) a buyer owns the home but initially finances and pays only 60 percent of the market price for unit using a traditional real estate transaction (such as down payment and financing through a mortgage with the buyer's financial institution).
- The Province initially finances and covers the remaining 40 percent of the market price with the landowner and developer.
- The 40 percent contribution is then repaid by the buyer to the Province either when the owner sells an AHI unit or after 25 years, from the purchase date, whichever comes first.
- A buyer under the initiative only needs an initial five percent deposit (at presale) on 60 percent of the initial market purchase price.
- AHI units will be sold as 99-year strata leaseholds.

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

- The Initiative and 60/40 purchase financing arrangement only applies to the original first-time purchase of the unit and not to secondary or subsequent purchase/sale transactions.
- The partnership will include MST Nations providing the land and the Government of B.C. contributing up to \$672 million, which is expected to be repaid by purchasers to the Province under the initiative, allowing the Province to reinvest returned funds into future provincial programs, which may include housing.
- The financial model behind the Attainable Homes Initiative is referred to as “shared-equity home-ownership” – a model that has been successfully employed in other jurisdictions such as Ontario where ‘Options for Homes’ has developed 3,400 homes over 14 different projects.

Primary Contact

JM McColl
NROD
Cell: Government

ADM Responsible

Carolyn Kamper
NROD
Cell: 250-208-9482

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

Non-Treaty Agreements in BC

SPEAKING POINTS

- **The Province works with First Nations to implement various approaches to reconciliation.**
- **We work with First Nations as they seek their own pathways to self-determination, economic prosperity, and reconciliation.**
- **Whether a First Nation is seeking a comprehensive treaty, or another form of agreement, the goals are the same: achieving lasting reconciliation with First Nations in a manner that creates tangible benefits in communities and recognizes rights and title.**
- **Comprehensive Reconciliation Agreements and other forms of agreements generally adopt incremental approaches to reconciliation of rights and title.**
- **These incremental approaches can provide up-front benefits that create meaningful change in communities, all while allowing the First Nation to work on complex governance, jurisdiction, and title issues over time.**
- **Our work with the Haida Nation is an example of this kind of incremental approach. What began with steps to address land use, shared decision-making, and legal recognition of the Council of the Haida Nation as the government of the Haida, led to recognition and confirmation of Aboriginal Title to Haida Gwaii by both BC and Canada.**

BACKGROUND

- Non-treaty agreements include topic or process specific agreements such as Economic and Community Development Agreements (ECDA) which share Mineral Tax revenue, and Forest Consultation and Revenue Sharing Agreements (FCRSA) which share revenue from forestry.
- Non-treaty Agreements also include more comprehensive reconciliation approaches that may or may not include Canada.
- Non-treaty agreements can include financial transfers, capacity support, shared decision-making, governance building, and the negotiation of land ownership.
- Non-treaty agreements can contribute to economic certainty related to specific major projects, for example, Liquid Natural Gas or Pipeline Benefits Agreements.
- The Province views non-treaty agreements as opportunities to pursue the same outcomes as a treaty with First Nations that are not in favour of the treaty process. However, non-treaty agreements can also contribute incrementally towards comprehensive reconciliation through a treaty.

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

- Examples of recently concluded non-treaty agreements include:
 - shíshálh Foundation Agreement Renewal (2024)
 - Gaayhllxid Gíhlagalgang “Rising Tide” Haida Title Lands Agreement (2024)
 - Coastal First Nations Reconciliation Agreement (2024)
 - Gwets’en Nilt’i Pathways Agreement Renewal (GNPA) with Tsilhqot’in National Government and Canada (2024)
- Some examples of tripartite Comprehensive Reconciliation Agreements negotiations include:
 - Heiltsuk Nation (Tuigila Agreement for Implementation of Heiltsuk Title, Rights and Self-government)
 - Lake Babine Nation (Foundation Agreement)
 - Snuneymuxw First Nation (Memorandum of Understanding)

Primary Contact

Ashley Bodnar, Divisional Chief Negotiator
Negotiations and Regional Operations Division
Cell: 250-812-4321

ADM Responsible

Carolyn Kamper
Negotiations and Regional Operations Division
Cell: 250-208-9482

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

Natural Resource Projects

SPEAKING POINTS

- **My Ministry collaborates with provincial ministries to advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.**
- **Government has 18 projects that have been identified as close and mid-term potential (close to being online or ready to build) and large-scale economic impact.**
- **This is about actions government can take to improve its efficiency in decision making. These projects still need to meet or exceed B.C.'s world-class environmental standards.**
- **This is not about taking short cuts in our work with First Nations.**
- **Working with First Nations is vital to ensuring the success of our economy. From BC Hydro's call for power projects to groundbreaking consent-based partnerships for major mines, First Nations are helping grow and diversify B.C.'s economy.**
- **Deepening partnerships with First Nations will help us respond to the challenges in front of us, including the possibility of Trump's tariffs.**
- **The path to a stronger B.C. is through partnership with First Nations**

BACKGROUND

- On February 4, 2025, Premier David Eby announced a list of 18 major projects that the Province is seeking to expedite to reduce reliance on trade with the United States. The Province is also working to identify other projects that could support new jobs and economic development.
- The 18 major projects cover the energy, mining, and critical minerals sectors and have imminent or upcoming decision points. Combined, the major projects are worth approximately \$20 billion and would employ 8,000 people.
- The Minister's mandate letter includes direction to build partnerships that advance reconciliation in measurable ways and create tangible benefits for First Nations and all British Columbians, such as building more affordable housing, generating clean energy, creating good jobs, and protecting our environment.
- The Ministry is collaborating with agencies to develop negotiation strategies for each of the 18 major projects, as well as some others, to negotiate and develop partnership opportunities with First Nations. This work is preliminary and subject to mandate approvals.

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

Primary Contact

Dale Morgan, A/Chief Negotiator
North Regional Negotiations Team
Cell: 250-219-7095

ADM Responsible

Carolyn Kamper, ADM
NROD
Cell: 250-208-9482

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

New Fiscal Framework

SPEAKING POINTS

- **As part of implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, we are working towards a future where Indigenous governments can fulfil their responsibilities, care for their people, and manage their territories in ways that reflect their values.**
- **This will involve co-developing a new principled fiscal framework with Indigenous Peoples based on the recognition of Indigenous rights.**
- **The fiscal and economic context has changed significantly since the co-development process began over two years ago.**
- **First Nations have been clear that the projects that will help us diversify the economy need to be developed in partnership and include principled revenue sharing frameworks that support both Indigenous and Provincial governments.**
- **We remain committed to continuing this important work in a way that responds to the current pressures while meeting our commitments in the Declaration Act Action Plan.**

BACKGROUND

- Indigenous governments – like all governments – require sources of revenues to deliver service and accountabilities to their citizens.
- As a first step to a new fiscal framework, the Province committed to annual gaming revenue sharing in 2019 of about \$100 million per year, to support the priorities of First Nations communities.
- In April 2022, the Province committed to co-developing a new forestry revenue sharing model from the ground up with First Nations and, as an interim measure, more than doubled the total current amount of forest revenue-sharing.
- In November 2022, the Province released a discussion paper to Nations to help guide the co-development of a new fiscal framework and forestry revenue sharing.
- In March 2024, the Province sent a letter to all First Nations providing the update that a new forestry revenue sharing model would not be implemented in 2024, and that the enhanced FCRSA program rates would continue.
- The engagement and policy work takes time, effort, and partnership with First Nations, who have expressed a high level of interest in this program as a tool for supporting economic growth in the Province and providing benefits to First Nations.

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

Advice/Recommendations

-

Primary Contact

Ben Bisset
Fiscal Branch, IRR
Cell:Government

Executive Lead Responsible

Richard Purnell
IRR / FIN
Cell: (250) 507-0410

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

Overlap Challenges

SPEAKING POINTS

- **The Province acknowledges that overlap is a challenge and has implications for the work of advancing the implementation of First Nations title and rights.**
- **We have seen conflicts arise from the lack of clarity created by shared and overlapping territories. Solutions to this challenge will involve working with First Nations to support governance and nation-building initiatives, as well supporting Nation-centred approaches to address overlap challenges.**
- **BC recognizes that we have a role in trying to resolve overlap. To that end, the Premier has instructed me to prioritize working with First Nation partners to work to resolve issues related to overlap and boundary disputes.**
- **The resolution will involve discussions with First Nations governments and organizations, such as the First Nations Leadership Council, and I look forward to these important discussions and remain ready to support where appropriate.**

BACKGROUND

- The disruption of structured relations between First Nations in BC is a result of colonial systems and has resulted in governance, shared territory and overlap challenges.
- Conflicts due to overlapping territories in BC create uncertainty on the land base and can result in significant legal costs, dissuade economic development and investment, and negatively impact relationships.
- To address this uncertainty, courts have provided direction to BC to consider Strength of Claim in consultation and accommodation processes, and to consider assertions on the land in a formal way, even where multiple assertions exist within the same area.
- The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act) Action Plan Action 1.1 commits the Province, in partnership with the Government of Canada, to establish a new institution designed and driven by First Nations to provide supports to First Nations in their work of nation- and governance-rebuilding and boundary resolution in accordance with First Nations laws, customs, and traditions.
- The Minister's mandate letter includes direction to work with First Nation partners to prioritize Action 1.1 of the Declaration Act Action Plan to address overlap and boundary dispute resolution.
- BC recognizes that nation-rebuilding is the work of First Nations and supports this work to be led by First Nations. As such, we are working with the First Nations Leadership Council on Action 1.1 to guide us in preliminary discussions to begin

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

addressing boundary resolution issues in accordance with First Nations' laws, customs, and traditions.

- We are also examining BC's policies and approaches which contribute to the overlap issue, including our approach to assessing strength of claim.
- We are also examining BC's policies and approaches which contribute to the overlap issue, including our strength of claim approach.

Primary Contact

Robert Leece
Integrated Negotiations Branch
Cell, Government
Financial

ADM Responsible

Carolyn Kamper
Negotiations and Regional Operations Division
250-208-9482

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

shíshálh Nation Foundation Agreement Renewal

SPEAKING POINTS

- **As announced January 29, 2025, the Province and shíshálh Nation are reaffirming our shared commitment to long-term reconciliation by renewing the Foundation Agreement, a landmark agreement signed in 2018.**
- **The Foundation Agreement renewal supports the ongoing relationship between the Province and shíshálh Nation, developing strong partnerships founded on mutual interests and building regional economy.**
- **It provides a framework for subsequent negotiations on decision making and shíshálh Aboriginal title.**
- **Importantly, it integrates existing updates to the Dock Management Plan that were announced in the summer of 2024 following a robust community engagement process.**
- **We are committed to engaging with the public on this work.**
- **The Foundation Agreement renewal clearly outlines our commitments to engage with local governments and other partners as we move forward in the next five years.**
- **To demonstrate transparency, two public information sessions were held in March 2025.**

BACKGROUND

- In 2018, shíshálh Nation and B.C. made history by signing the Province's first Comprehensive Reconciliation Agreement (CRA), a long-term phased agreement focused on government-to-government relations that recognize inherent rights and title.
- This phased approach to long-term reconciliation, where the Foundation Agreement is renewed every five years, allows for transformative change to take place in a structured way that is predictable, transparent and allows for learning to occur as shíshálh Nation and the Province's relationship unfolds over time.
- The Province and shíshálh Nation have made substantial progress together since signing the Foundation Agreement in 2018.
- The first five-year phase of the Foundation Agreement concluded in 2023, at which time the Province and shíshálh Nation negotiated commitments for the second phase, represented by the Agreement renewal.

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

- The renewal was signed in August 2024 and announced January 29, 2025. It includes:
 - identifying and transferring six square kilometers of Crown lands within shíshálh swiya to shíshálh Nation, for both cultural and economic use;
 - engaging in detailed multi-year discussions regarding the recognition of shíshálh Nation's aboriginal title; this work requires in-depth consultation and approval from various government decision-making bodies, like Cabinet and the shíshálh Council;
 - exploring a future exclusive decision-making opportunity (e.g., from other agreements, a nation has the exclusive right to regulate their own hunters);
 - exploring future shared decision-making opportunities under section 7 of DRIPA;
 - providing ongoing funding to support the Nation's economic development, culture and language;
 - supporting environmental and cultural restoration work, collaborative monitoring and enforcement, and environmental and ecological studies in the shíshálh swiya; and,
 - reaffirming the changes to the Dock Management Plan announced in August 2024.
- The Agreement renewal has committed to \$79 million over five years to support shíshálh Nation's work in a number of initiatives, including:
 - \$47.58 million over five years for economic development;
 - \$15 million to support the construction of a cultural centre;
 - \$8.83 million over five years for Agreement implementation and further negotiations under the Agreement;
 - \$2.77 million over five years for environmental and cultural restoration work;
 - \$1.85 million to implement and further develop water infrastructure initiatives on shíshálh Lands;
 - \$1.6 million over five years for culture and language revitalization;
 - Up to \$710,000 over four years towards a collaborative monitoring and enforcement program in the shíshálh swiya;
 - \$500,000 to carry out environmental and ecological studies;
 - \$200,000 for infrastructure to support cultural initiatives.

Primary Contact

Heinz Dyck, Chief Negotiator
NROD
Cell: (250) 889-4121

ADM Responsible

Carolyn Kamper
NROD
Cell: (250) 208-9482

KEY MESSAGES: *Tariff response*

Government response

- Deepening partnerships with First Nations is essential to responding to the significant challenges in front of all of us.
- The uncertainty around our relations and trade with our biggest trade partner in the United States has made discussions with First Nations leaders even more urgent.
- The First Nations Leadership Council – BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit and Union of BC Indian Chiefs – are a part of the BC Trade and Economic Security Task Force.
- It's important that First Nations governments be at the table as we build our collective response, and that Nations know how tariffs will impact Indigenous interests so they can provide input and develop positions as the situation evolves.
- These are uncertain times and there will be challenges but I am confident we will get through them.

Task force

- The Premier's task force on trade and economic security met with the shared goal of protecting B.C., its people, and communities from unjustified tariffs.
- The task force agreed BC will bring in immediate short-term measures, along with medium and long-term measures to grow and strengthen B.C.'s economy and protect businesses, families, and jobs.
- Key themes include:
 - Supporting the sale of B.C. products over U.S. products domestically and internationally
 - Protecting B.C. jobs
 - Accelerating major priority projects
 - Speeding up permitting and implementing regulatory efficiencies
 - Partnership with First Nations and Indigenous reconciliation
 - Diversifying markets both domestically and internationally
 - Strengthening supply chains
 - Incentives to invest in B.C., grow the economy and protect jobs
 - Tariff response measures at the ready
- Task force members are regularly submitting input direct to the Premier's Office and will attend regularly scheduled meetings for the foreseeable future.

Partnerships

- We know that by deepening partnerships with First Nations we will be better positioned to respond to the challenges we face.
- As Premier Eby has said, the provinces, First Nations and the federal government need to be aligned and stick together to defend jobs and economic activity at this time.
- Partnership with First Nations is essential in all of this work.
- I believe partnerships are the key – not only to moving forward, but to moving forward faster.
- The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act is the legal and policy framework guiding our efforts.
- This is a challenge that challenges ALL of us. And the solution also needs to involve ALL of us.
- No matter what Trump throws at us, we know we are stronger together.

Shared decision-making

- Implementation of the Declaration Act includes continued efforts to develop shared decision-making agreements.
- Choosing to move forward together with First Nations – sharing decision-making on ways to build a stronger B.C. – is key to our tariff response.
- As the Premier says, we need to demonstrate the real benefits of shared decision-making in action.
- Over the past two years, B.C. announced mandates to negotiate joint and consent-based decision agreements with the Tahltan Nation and 'Namgis First Nation.
- B.C. also signed two consent-based agreements with the Tahltan Central Government under section 7 of the Declaration Act for the Eskay Creek and the Red Chris mines.
- I know that's not enough progress.
- I acknowledge that – and we are committed to, and focused on, developing new agreements that recognize Indigenous jurisdiction and self-determination.
- B.C. has recently entered into several agreements that include exploratory discussions on shared decision-making, including the Coastal First Nations Regional Accord and shíshálh Foundation Agreement renewal.
- As we proceed, we will continue to engage with people and businesses to show how working collaboratively can help bring stability and predictability and move us all forward.

Priority projects

- We've identified major projects including mines, renewable energy and natural gas that can be accelerated through government action.
- These projects still need to meet or exceed B.C.'s world-class environmental standards.
- Our focus will be on getting these projects approved as quickly as possible and issuing their permits faster.
- We are focused on streamlining the way government does its job and getting to decisions on sticky issues faster so projects can advance.
- It doesn't mean shortcuts around Indigenous participation; it means it gets the public services attention faster.
- Most of these projects are First Nations owned or include an Indigenous equity component.
- We believe shared decision-making agreements, in the Declaration Act environment, can help us move forward even more quickly, avoiding delays and conflict on major projects.
- The B.C. government is committed to consulting First Nations on legislative and policy changes that could impact rights and interests.
- And we are committed to understanding First Nations perspectives and meaningfully addressing any concerns that may be raised.

Economic development

- Economic development is not just the 'big major projects', but also small and medium size projects that First Nations are driving, themselves, right across the Province.
- Many First Nations have and are building successful enterprises that generate their own source revenue.
- That includes in Lake Babine in forestry or Osoyoos in tourism or W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council in transportation.

- We also know a healthy B.C. economy requires First Nations across the province to have meaningful involvement and ownership in projects.
- Our government is continuing to develop a First Nations Equity Financing Program to support equity participation by First Nations in new or expanded projects.

Economic Stabilization (Tariff Response) Act

- British Columbians continue to face an unprecedented threat of unjustified tariffs and attacks on our sovereignty from the U.S. President.
 - He has repeatedly said he wants Canada to become the 51st state, and media reports now suggest Trump wants to erase the Canada-U.S. border and take British Columbia's water.
 - Trump's threats are growing – and we've seen him moving quickly and unpredictably using executive orders.
 - We cannot afford to leave BC vulnerable to Trump – we need to arm ourselves to move just as fast to defend British Columbians if Trump forces us to.
 - That's why we've introduced the Economic Stabilization (Tariff Response) Act to allow Cabinet to quickly implement actions and responses, including freeing up interprovincial trade, directing government and crown corporations to buy Canadian first, and add tolls or fees on public infrastructure if needed.
 - It's time limited and it's about helping us act fast to defend BC - giving us the time and space to develop longer-term solutions to strengthen our economy and support good jobs for people.
-

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Author: Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation / Ministry of Water, Lands and Resource Stewardship

Date: February 26, 2025

Minister Responsible: Across government

Consultation with US Tribes

Differences in consultation

- It is common for the Province to consult with multiple Indigenous groups that hold rights in shared territories as part of fulfilling legal obligations to consult and accommodate Aboriginal rights.
- First Nations located in B.C. are an important focus of all levels of government, including the Province of B.C.
- In a 2021 Supreme Court of Canada ruling – known as the Desautel decision – the court noted the Crown's duty to consult with Aboriginal groups outside of Canada may be different from those in Canada.
- As such, the scope of consultation the Province undertakes with US Tribes may be different from its consultation with First Nations in B.C.
- The Province is exploring the development of a policy to reflect this, with B.C.-based First Nations central to this conversation.

Engagement with B.C.-based First Nations

- Early discussions with First Nations in B.C. have indicated they have a strong interest in being involved in the development of any provincial policy regarding consultation with Aboriginal groups located outside of Canada.
- The Province will work with First Nations in B.C. in the development of the consultation policy.

Consultation with U.S. Tribes

- The Desautel judgement opened up the possibility for other U.S.-based Aboriginal groups to assert rights in Canada and based on the extent to which those groups have sufficient evidence to support their claims, the Province may need to consult those groups as well.

- The Province is developing a policy, in consultation and co-operation with First Nations, to clarify its approach to consultation with Aboriginal groups located outside of Canada that may have credible claims in British Columbia.
- Given the national scope of issues related to US Tribes, the Province welcomes the federal government's participation in this matter.
- B.C. will also work with proponents and industry associations, as well as other interested parties, as appropriate.

If asked on timelines for policy development

- Developing this policy will take time and we want to get it right.
- While the policy is being developed, the Province will consult with U.S. Tribes on a case-by-case basis as appropriate to ensure we meet our legal obligations.

Consultation with Lummi Nation and Southeast Alaska Indigenous Transboundary Commission (SEITC)

- The Environmental Assessment Office is consulting directly with the Southeast Alaska Indigenous Transboundary Commission and affected Alaskan Tribes, on the Eskay Creek Revitalization project, and has been since September 2021.
- The Environmental Assessment office will be consulting with the Lummi Nation in Washington State in a number of projects, as appropriate.
- While the Desautel case originated in British Columbia, the judgement and associated implications are nation-wide and as a result, the Government of Canada has an essential role in reviewing and responding to claims of rights by Aboriginal groups outside of Canada.

Consulting with Lakes Tribe & implications of the Desautel decision

- In the Desautel decision, the Supreme Court of Canada affirmed that the Lakes Tribe of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation in Washington State is a modern-day successor group of the Sinixt people, and are therefore considered part of the 'Aboriginal Peoples of Canada' that holds section 35 rights in British Columbia.
- The Desautel decision also confirmed that the Lakes Tribe has proven hunting rights in British Columbia.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

- **As a result of the Desautel judgement, the Province has an obligation to not unlawfully infringe the rights of Lakes Tribe which means consultation and accommodation may be required by Provincial officials to uphold our legal obligations.**
- **The Government of Canada has an essential role in reviewing and responding to claims by Aboriginal groups outside of Canada to section 35 rights.**
- **By engaging with the Lakes Tribe, as well as other First Nations in British Columbia, we can successfully implement the Desautel decision and build a greater understanding how to move forward together.**

Concerns from Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) with Lakes Tribe/Sinixt

- **We recognize and respect the Syilx Okanagan Nation's role in relation to Sinixt people.**
- **We are proud of our government-to-government relationship with the Syilx – and want to build on that.**
- **I want to be clear that any consultation or engagement the Province has/undertakes with the Lakes Tribe in no way diminishes the Province's obligation to consult with the Syilx or other First Nations.**
- **We continue to strongly encourage Canada, who has the lead responsibility in this, to weigh in.**

EAO project reviews

- **The Environmental Assessment Office – the EAO – takes obligations to consult with First Nations who may be impacted by a proposed project very seriously – including with tribes in the U.S.**
- **The EAO has a longstanding practice of engaging U.S. Tribes where there may be potential environmental impacts across the border from proposed projects in B.C.**
- **The EAO is committed to meeting its constitutional obligations in its consultation on these projects – and will continue to do so for any U.S. Tribe with a credible assertion to Aboriginal rights in Canada where these asserted rights could be impacted by a proposed project.**

- **While the consultation policy is being developed, EAO project reviews will carry on. The Province will determine on a case-by-case basis how it will fulfil any consultation obligations it has with Aboriginal groups located outside of Canada.**

KEY FACTS:

The 2021 Supreme Court of Canada's Desautel decision clarified that Aboriginal groups located outside of Canada that assert section 35 rights may be owed a duty to consult.

The Province, led by the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS), is developing a policy framework that addresses any legal obligations B.C. has to engage with U.S.-based Indigenous groups. The framework will clearly identify roles and responsibilities as well as a process for section 35 consultation obligations. It will provide the transparency that all Indigenous groups and proponents require.

The framework will take into account the Desautel decision and commitments to work in consultation and co-operation with First Nations in B.C., under the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. While the policy is being developed, the Province will determine on a case-by-case basis whether claims by U.S. Tribes for consultation are credible and triggers a duty to consult.

Advice/Recommendations; Intergovernmental Communications

A number of B.C.-based First Nations, including Tahltan, Nisga'a and Taku River Tlingit have been engaged on this matter to varying degrees. A comprehensive engagement plan will be developed.

The Government of Canada has an essential role in reviewing and responding to claims by Indigenous Nations outside of Canada to section 35 rights. Canada is developing a policy framework in response to addressing claims from US-based Indigenous groups.

Assertions by SEITC and Lummi

Intergovernmental Communications; Legal Information

;

ADVICE TO MINISTER

Legal Information

Transboundary engagements with US Tribes

For good neighbour reasons, provincial ministries will continue to engage U.S. Tribes and other U.S. governments to discuss transboundary issues. These processes are often guided by memorandums of understanding with the Province.

U.S. Tribes, in these discussions, are engaged as stakeholders and not as an Aboriginal people of Canada:

- WLRS engages several U.S. Tribes in numerous forums involving transboundary watersheds. Discussions are about transboundary issues involving fish, water, and drought.
- EAO has notified U.S. Tribes in Alaska (including SEITC), Washington, Idaho and Montana regarding potential transboundary impacts of six projects as per memorandum of understandings with those states.
- The South East Initiatives Secretariat is engaging two US Tribes in Washington about transboundary impacts of water pollution.

EA consultation process

The Environmental Assessment Office's longstanding and current practice is to engage with potentially affected Indigenous communities in the United States where there are potential transboundary effects associated with proposed projects located in B.C. The environmental assessment process is not a rights-determining process. The EAO considers all information that may be brought forward during the environmental assessment process, including in relation to any potential impacts on Indigenous nations and their rights. Meaningful engagement with potentially affected communities is critical to ensure the responsible development of mineral resources in the transboundary region.

The B.C. EA process ensures that any potential environmental, economic, social, cultural and health effects that may occur during the lifetime of a major project are thoroughly assessed, including downstream impacts in transboundary watersheds. This is the process for environmental assessments of major projects, regardless of the outcome of SEITC and Lummi's requests to participate in the assessment.

Desautel decision

The Supreme Court of Canada in *R. v. Desautel* (April 2021) agreed with lower courts that the Lakes Tribe of the Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT) located in Washington State, as a modern-day successor of the Sinixt people, are “an Aboriginal peoples of Canada” for the purposes of section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. Because of this, the Lakes Tribe are entitled to assert Aboriginal rights in B.C. (specifically hunting and harvest rights). While the decision was specific to the Lakes Tribe, the ruling has implications for other transnational groups along the northwestern and southern border with the US.

The Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) claims “the Syilx Okanagan Nation is the successor group for Sinixt descendants because many members of our communities are of Sinixt descent, the Sinixt have always been part of the Syilx Okanagan Nation, and we have continued to hunt, gather, travel and perform our ceremonies throughout our Territory including the Arrow Lakes region, to the present day.”

Intergovernmental Communications; Legal Information

Media Interest: Interest in transboundary consultation has increased in the past several months. Engaging with the Sinixt became an election issue when Premier Eby and ONA issued [joint statement](#) during the campaign period.

MIRR Communications Director responsible:
Leanne Ritchie
MIRR responsible DM:
Tom McCarthy
Prepared by: Kim Hudson (MIRR-GCPE)

WLRS Communications Director responsible:
Sean Leslie
WLRS responsible ADM:
Colin Ward

ENV (EAO) Communications Director responsible:
Scott McKenzie

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and
Reconciliation
Date: April 28, 2025
Minister Responsible: Hon. Christine Boyle

Treaties in B.C. – Status

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The Province is leading a substantial number of ongoing negotiations with First Nations.
- In summer 2024, provincial, federal and First Nations Chief Negotiators initialed three treaties with the Kitselas [kit-sel-us], Kitsumkalum [kits-um-kale-um] and K'ómoks [co-mox] First Nations.
- Two more tables are in advanced negotiations: the Te'mexw [te-MUCK] Treaty Association and Metlakatla and other tables are close behind.
- Over recent years, First Nations, Canada, and B.C. have been focused on creating innovative treaty agreements that are strong but flexible and better suited to addressing the needs of individual First Nations.

Additional Messaging:

- Treaties are the embodiment of living relationships between First Nations, B.C. and Canada.
- These constitutionally protected agreements support strong, healthy, thriving communities, benefit First Nations, and set us on a clear path to reconciliation.
- Treaties are successful and enduring when they embed the recognition of the inherent rights of First Nations and have the ability to evolve over time.

If asked about policy on treaty negotiations:

- The provincial and federal governments and the First Nations Summit finalized a new policy, the Recognition and Reconciliation of Rights Policy, in 2019 to guide treaty negotiations in the province, reflecting recent approaches to negotiation in line with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- The policy bases treaties on a recognition of rights and states explicitly that treaties do not require First Nations to extinguish their rights.

If asked about overlapping territory:

- **Part of negotiating a modern treaty involves engagement among affected First Nations to address boundary disputes, where there is an overlapping assertion of an interest in the same territory between two or more First Nations.**
- **Just as modern treaties do not extinguish the rights of a First Nation, they cannot infringe or extinguish the rights of neighbouring First Nations.**
- **We have been having discussions with affected First Nations, and we will continue to work closely with them to seek to address their issues and concerns. This is necessary work that will take time.**
- **While there is more work to do amongst the First Nations to develop protocols for the shared territories, we have time to do that work. I will do whatever I can to help facilitate those important discussions.**

KEY FACTS:

In recent years, the B.C. government has focused on improving process and policy for treaty-making in B.C. First Nations and the Province are guided in the negotiation process by the British Columbia Treaty Commission (Treaty Commission). The Treaty Commission assists the parties in navigating the made-in-BC negotiations framework, including moving through various stages of the process.

First Nations that have moved directly to stage 5 (Negotiation to Finalize a Treaty) without first completing Stage 4 (Negotiation of an Agreement-in-Principle) include: Stó:lō Xwexwilmexw Treaty Association, Metlakatla First Nation, Wei Wai Kum First Nation, Kwiakah First Nation, We Wai Kai Nation, Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group and Tlowitsis Nation.

Three treaties were initialed in Summer 2024 (Kitselas, Kitsumkalum, and K'ómoks). The Te'mexw Treaty Association signed five Chief Negotiators' Letters of Understanding (one for each Te'mexw Member Nation) on April 15, 2024 and will seek approvals to initial after the election.

Historic treaties

Treaties created between the 1700s and the early 1920s are referred to as historic treaties. In B.C., this includes the Vancouver Island Treaties, also known as the Douglas Treaties, as well as Treaty 8. While these treaties are referred to as "historic," they are active legal agreements that outline the Province's ongoing obligations to and relationships with signatory or descendant First Nations. Historic treaty rights are affirmed and enshrined in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. Historic Treaty Nations may enter into agreements with the Crown, such as strategic engagement agreements, revenue sharing agreements, joint decision-making agreements, or modern treaties.

Vancouver Island (Douglas) Treaties: 1850-1854

The Vancouver Island Treaties are a series of fourteen distinct treaties between First Nations on Vancouver Island and the Crown. The development of these treaties was led by Chief Factor James Douglas between 1850 to 1854. These treaties were negotiated and agreed to through oral discussions and put in written form, often years, afterwards. Numerous descendants of the signatory Nations, who were party to the oral agreements, indicated that what was written did not capture what was actually agreed, with the Crown adjusting the written text in their favour.

In February 2025, Canada, B.C. and the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council representing Tsartlip and Tseycum First Nations signed a joint statement recognizing the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation as beneficiaries of the North Saanich and South Saanich Treaties of 1852 for the first time. Signed in 1852 between certain representatives of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation and Governor James Douglas, successive Crown governments

ADVICE TO MINISTER

either have not recognized, or held vastly differing views on the scope and content of these treaties. This collaboration between Tsartlip and Tseycum First Nations, B.C., and Canada acknowledges the special treaty relationship created by the North and South Saanich Treaties.

Treaty 8: 1899

Treaty No. 8 (Treaty 8) is the largest of the numbered, historic treaties negotiated between the Federal Government and First Nations in Canada between 1871 and 1923. The Treaty covers roughly 841,487.137 km² of what is now northern Alberta, northwest Saskatchewan, northeastern B.C., and southwest portions of the Northwest Territories, making it the largest treaty by area in the history of Canada. It is home to 41 First Nation communities, with eight Treaty 8 First Nations in northeastern B.C. Seven First Nations communities in northeastern B.C. signed on to Treaty 8 between 1900 and 1914 (Blueberry River, Doig River, Fort Nelson, Halfway River, Prophet River, Saulteau, and West Moberly First Nations), and McLeod Lake Indian Band adhered to Treaty 8 in 2000 through an Adhesion and Settlement Agreement with both Canada and B.C.

Modern treaties

B.C. has four modern treaties in effect with eight First Nations:

- Nisga'a Final Agreement – Effective May 11, 2000 (negotiated outside of the BC Treaty Commission framework)
- Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement – Effective April 3, 2009
- Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement – Effective April 1, 2011
 - Includes five independent Indigenous governments: Huu-ay-aht First Nations, Toquaht Nation, Uchucklesaht Tribe Government, Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' First Nations and Yuułu?il?ath Government (Ucluelet First Nation), all from the West Coast of Vancouver Island
- Tla'amin Final Agreement – Effective April 5, 2016

First Nations concluding negotiations/moving toward ratification

K'ómoks

- **Status:** Advanced stage 5 treaty negotiations; First Nation ratification vote held on March 8, 2025
 - Official K'ómoks ratification results indicate the following votes were cast to ratify the K'ómoks Constitution:
 - YES: 181 ballots, or 83% of votes
 - NO: 35 ballots, or 16% of votes
 - 2 spoiled ballots
 - 0 ballots were determined to be invalid
 - 218 ballots were cast out of 238 eligible voters, or 91.6%.
 - Official K'ómoks ratification results indicate the following votes were cast to ratify the Treaty:
 - YES: 177 ballots, or 81% of votes
 - NO: 40 ballots, or 18% of votes
 - 1 spoiled ballot
 - 0 ballots were determined to be invalid
 - 218 ballots were cast out of 238 eligible voters, or 91%.
 - With 83% of votes cast in favour of ratifying the Constitution, and 81% of votes cast in favour of the Treaty, the ratification process of the K'ómoks Constitution and Treaty will move forward, with the next step being introduction of provincial legislation.

- **Milestone:** First Nation ratification vote held on March 8, 2025; Eligible voters voted in favour of the K'ómoks Treaty and Constitution. Treaty initialed on July 22, 2024. Offer to conclude stage 5 negotiations. Land and cash offers sent to K'ómoks First Nation from B.C. and Canada (sent Nov 2, 2022). Canada provided an updated cash component, which was accepted by K'ómoks in October 2023. A Chief Negotiators Letter of Understanding was signed on November 16, 2023.
- **Innovations:** New approach to the **recognition of rights** in the treaty, including a living agreement approach based on **periodic renewal** of the treaty and an approach for the incorporation of new rights into treaty, as well as an **approach to shared decision-making** within the traditional territory, outside of treaty lands.
- **Public Engagement:** A what we heard report was released on May 29, 2023, which describes engagement activities and participation rates (from Fall 2022 round of public open houses), including feedback and questions collected during engagement, along with responses from the negotiating partners. The initialed treaty is publicly available. K'ómoks undertook significant community engagement in preparation for the ratification vote.
 - In Fall 2022, partners held the following engagement sessions:
 - 7 local government presentations
 - 4 public open houses with 340 participants
 - 4 community events
- **Nations with overlapping territory:** Homalco, Hul'qumi'num, Snaw-naw-AS, Nuuchah-nulth, Sechelt, Snuneymuxw, Tla'amin, Te'mexw, Tlowitsis, We Wai Kai, Wei Wai Kum, and Kwiakah

Kitselas

- **Status:** Advanced stage 5 treaty negotiations; First Nation ratification vote held on April 10, 2025 (confirmed)
 - Official Kitselas ratification results indicate the following votes were cast to ratify the Kitselas Constitution:
 - YES: 434 ballots, or 81% of votes
 - NO: 97 ballots, or 18% of votes
 - 6 spoiled ballots
 - 0 ballots were determined to be invalid
 - 537 ballots were cast out of 556 eligible voters, or 96.5%.
 - Official Kitselas ratification results indicate the following votes were cast to ratify the Treaty:
 - YES: 453 ballots, or 86% of votes
 - NO: 71 ballots, or 13.5% of votes
 - 3 spoiled ballots
 - 0 ballots were determined to be invalid
 - 527 ballots were cast out of 556 eligible voters, or 94.7%.
 - With 81% of votes cast in favour of ratifying the Constitution, and 86% of votes cast in favour of the Treaty, the ratification process of the Kitselas Constitution and Treaty will move forward, with the next step being introduction of provincial legislation.
- **Milestone:** Treaty initialed on June 24, 2024. Land and Cash Offers presented to Kitselas First Nation on June 22, 2023, in Vancouver. Kitselas provided a signed acceptance of the offer to provincial negotiators on July 4, 2023. A Chief Negotiators Letter of Understanding was signed with Kitselas on October 10, 2023.
- **Innovations:** New approach to the **recognition of rights in the treaty**, including a living agreement approach based on **periodic renewal** of the treaty and an approach for the incorporation of new rights into treaty, as well as an **approach to shared decision-making** within the Treaty Nation territory, outside of treaty lands.
- **Public Engagement:** Treaty public engagement open houses took place on May 27, 2023 (in-person, Terrace) and June 7, 2023 (virtual presentation). Partners publicly released a what we heard

ADVICE TO MINISTER

report about the engagement on February 14, 2024. The initialed treaty is publicly available. Kitselas undertook significant community engagement in preparation for the ratification vote.

- **Nations with overlapping territory:** four other Tsimshian First Nations (Kitsumkalum, Metlakatla, Gitga'at and Kitasoo/ Xai'xais), Gitxsan, Haida, Heiltsuk, Lax Kw'alaams, Gitxaala, Nisga'a, and Wet'suwet'en

Kitsumkalum

- **Status:** Advanced stage 5 treaty negotiations; First Nation ratification vote – Fall 2025 (TBD)
- **Milestone:** Treaty initialed on June 25, 2024. Land and Cash Offers presented to Kitsumkalum First Nation on June 22, 2023, in Vancouver. Kitsumkalum accepted the offer in September 2023. A Chief Negotiators Letter of Understanding with Kitsumkalum was signed on November 28, 2023.
- **Innovations:** New approach to the **recognition of rights** in the treaty, including a living agreement approach based on **periodic renewal** of the treaty and an approach for the incorporation of new rights into treaty, as well as an approach to **shared decision-making** within the Treaty Nation territory, outside of treaty lands.
- **Public Engagement:** Treaty public engagement open houses took place on May 27, 2023 (in-person, Terrace) and June 7, 2023 (virtual presentation). Partners publicly released a what we heard report about the engagement on February 14, 2024. The initialed treaty is publicly available. Kitsumkalum is undertaking significant community engagement in preparation for ratification targeted for fall 2025.
- **Nations with overlapping territory:** four other Tsimshian First Nations (Kitselas, Metlakatla, Gitga'at and Kitasoo/ Xai'xais), Gitxsan, Haida, Heiltsuk, Lax Kw'alaams, Gitxaala, Nisga'a, and Wet'suwet'en

First Nations in advanced negotiations

Te'mexw

The Te'mexw Treaty Association (TTA) is negotiating modern treaties on behalf of its five Member Nations: Malahat, Beecher Bay (SC'IANEW), Songhees, Snaw-Naw-As (Nanoose), and T'Sou-ke.

- **Status:** Advanced stage 5 treaty negotiations
- **Milestone:** In 2017, B.C. and Canada tabled Stage 5 land and cash offers for Malahat, Snaw-Naw-As and T'Sou-ke. The offers to Songhees and SC'IANEW were deferred while Canada secured approvals to include key federal Crown land parcels – Hatley Park and Mary Hill. BC and Canada tabled closing offers with all five TTA Member Nations on October 18, 2023. Five Chiefs Letters of Understanding (one with each Nation) were signed on April 15, 2024 (resigned on March 7, 2025 in a ceremony to mark continued commitment by treaty partners).
- **Innovations:** Approaches to treaty in an urban environment and with Douglas Treaty Nations.
- **Public Engagement:** In a Jan 30, 2023 news release, B.C. and TTA announced that Sooke Mountain and Discovery Island Marine provincial parks are being considered for inclusion in treaties currently being negotiated with the T'Sou-ke and Songhees Nations.
 - In Spring 2023, Canada, B.C. and the TTA held a series of public open houses, where further information about lands proposed to become Treaty Settlement Lands was being shared.
 - 6 local government presentations; 8 open house public engagement sessions held from February 25-April 29, 2023 (563 attendees); 2 virtual public engagement events (59 attendees); 4 B.C. government staff events (245 attendees)
 - Partners released a what we heard report on May 9, 2024, which details the recent engagement.

Metlakatla

- **Status:** Advanced stage 5 treaty negotiations

- **Milestone:** *Metlakatla First Nation Transition to Stage 5 and Treaty Revitalization Agreement* (signed in 2019) signified the Parties' commitment to commence Stage 5 negotiations without signing a Stage 4 Agreement-in-Principle and established a new approach to Metlakatla Treaty negotiations. Metlakatla has expressed an interest in finalising a treaty by mid 2025. On April 10, 2024, Canada made a unilateral comprehensive cash offer to Metlakatla as a precursor to a closing offer to support moving the table toward closing. The parties continue to negotiate the land package.
- **Innovations:** The Metlakatla treaty will be similar to the Kitselas and Kitsumkalum treaties. A significant innovation that remains under negotiation is how to address Metlakatla's interest in the foreshore adjacent to treaty lands. A Foreshore Working Group involving Metlakatla and several federal and provincial departments has met regularly to co-develop a way to address Metlakatla's interests in the foreshore and the complex jurisdictional interests of the Parties in these areas. Negotiations continue to build on other agreements Metlakatla has signed, such as the Coastal First Nations Reconciliation Protocol Agreement and the Protected Area Collaborative Management Agreement.
- **Public Engagement:** So far, public engagement has been limited to regular updates with local governments.

Media Interest

Media on treaties generally stems from particular negotiations, not comments on the treaty making process as a whole. There has, however, been regular comment that the Province is moving too slowly on creating new treaties. The public open houses (Feb 25-April 13) for the Te'mexw Treaties garnered significant local media interest on Southern Vancouver Island. A B.C./TTA news release about lands proposed for Te'mexw treaties (2 provincial parks being considered for inclusion – Sooke Mountain Park and Discovery Island Marine Park) sparked several news stories and subsequent interviews with Chief Sam, Chief Planes and Robert Janes (TTA lawyer).

The three treaty initialing events garnered wide provincial and local media coverage. While most of the commentary and reporting was positive, boundary disputes and overlapping territories were discussed, with a few neighbouring First Nations issuing press releases about their concerns.

Leading up to the K'ómoks and Kitselas ratification votes in spring 2025, there was increased regional coverage regarding overlapping territories, with letters expressing concerns from neighbouring First Nations published in the media. The injunction filed by Wei Wai Kum First Nation to stop the K'ómoks ratification vote was also covered regionally.

Communications Director responsible: Leanne Ritchie
 Responsible program: ADM Carolyn Kamper
 Prepared by: Kaitlyn Engholm

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Ministry of Indigenous Relations & Reconciliation
Date: February 6, 2025
Minister Responsible: Hon. Christine Boyle

Treaty 8 Consensus Document

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The Province is taking steps to right past wrongs and uphold the legally protected treaty rights of Treaty 8 Nations.
- This is important work for all of us; it's about leaving the land in a good way for future generations and advancing meaningful reconciliation with First Nations.
- This work ensures all Treaty 8 Nation members can meaningfully exercise their rights, while building a healthy, stable and secure future for everyone.

Consensus Document

- The Province and Treaty 8 Nations have co-developed a set of initiatives for how to evolve the management of lands and resources together, which is a critical part of B.C.'s work to meet the expectations of the court in the Yahey Decision.
- This is called the "Consensus Document," which lays out a comprehensive path for the governments to walk together, and work together, on a variety of shared interest topics.
- Advancing the Treaty 8 – B.C. treaty relationship together and honouring Treaty 8 will protect and uphold Treaty 8 rights and ensure British Columbians, especially those living and working in Treaty 8 territory, better understand Treaty 8.
- Though the Letter of Agreement and Revenue Sharing Agreements signed in 2022 are now expired the intentions of the Consensus Document continue and has been re-enforced in the new Revenue Sharing Agreements signed in the fall of 2024.

If asked about speed of implementation

- The Blueberry Implementation Agreement and the Consensus Document are complex initiatives that have never been done before, and we know that implementation has had its challenges.
- We are working very closely with all Treaty 8 Nations to implement these agreements.

- **This work will transform how the Province and First Nations steward land, water and resources together to better manage for cumulative effect and ensure Treaty rights are upheld.**
- **Industry engagement and input has been very valuable. This is most noticeable in new development planning initiatives.**
- **These historic agreements will guide a partnership approach to land, water and resource stewardship that ensures First Nations can meaningfully exercise their Treaty 8 rights and provide stability and predictability for industry and communities in the region.**
- **I want to be clear – we believe in the objective in the Blueberry Implementation Agreement and Consensus Document – that we need to find a new balance. That balance includes resource development, done in partnership and respectful of treaty rights.**

KEY FACTS:

On Jan. 20, 2023, the Province and four of the Treaty 8 First Nations (Doig River, Fort Nelson, Halfway River and Saulteau) signed the Consensus Document and Letters of Agreement in 2023. The remaining Treaty 8 First Nations: McLeod Lake Indian Band, Prophet River First Nation and West Moberly First Nations signed Letters of Agreement later in 2023 with the final signature coming in March of 2023.

This follows the announcement of the Blueberry River First Nations Implementation Agreement, signed on Jan. 18, 2023. This agreement will guide the parties forward in a partnership approach to land, water and resource stewardship that ensures Blueberry River members can meaningfully exercise their Treaty 8 rights, and provide stability and predictability for industry in the region.

The main priorities of the Treaty 8 Consensus Document are:

- A new approach to wildlife co-management that promotes improved shared understanding and management of wildlife
- New land protection measures and land use plans
- A cumulative effects management system linked to natural resource landscape planning and restoration initiatives
- Pilots to advance shared decision-making on planning and stewardship activities
- A multi-year, shared restoration fund to help heal the land and people
- A new revenue sharing approach to support the priorities of Treaty 8 First Nations communities
- Actions to promote respect for Treaty 8 through collaborative promotion, anti-racism training and awareness building, education and community services

The Consensus Document commitments align with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by addressing Indigenous self-determination, cultural revitalization, and decision making over traditional territories and resources, a greater sharing of the benefits of resource activity; as well as by their support for healing the land through restoration and honouring the treaty.

Letters of Agreement

The Letters of Agreement with Doig River, Fort Nelson, Halfway River, Prophet River, Saulteau and West Moberly First Nations confirm the parties' commitments set out in the Consensus Document. In some cases, the agreements also provide further First Nation-specific clarity and commitments for action. All agreements provide an unparalleled opportunity for sharing decisions together. Treaty 8 First Nations and the Province will make decisions together on the land that ensure all First Nation members can meaningfully exercise their rights, while building a healthy and stable future for everyone. The Letters of

ADVICE TO MINISTER

Agreement expired March 31 2024. Negotiations to extend are ongoing and have not yet been finalized. Negotiations on the themes of the consensus document have continued throughout 2024 and will continue to be a priority into 2025.

Revenue Sharing Agreements

As part of the Consensus Document, seven of the eight Treaty 8 First Nations (Blueberry River has a separate agreement) also signed revenue sharing agreements. In Sept. 2024, the Province signed what has been described as an enhanced roll-over of the revenue sharing agreements that expired on April 1, 2024. With these enhancements it is anticipated that each Nation would receive about \$2 - \$3 million more in revenue sharing each year than they otherwise would have based on the previous revenue sharing agreements. The revenue sharing agreements are until March 31, 2026, with the ability to extend if both parties agree. McLeod Lake Indian Band also signed a letter of agreement and a revenue sharing agreement with the Province on May 3, 2023. These agreements are very similar to the agreements with the other Treaty 8 Nations and will accelerate joint work to assess and manage for cumulative effects, to heal the land through restoration activities, and advance a new path for land and natural resource management in Treaty 8 territory.

Restoration funds

The Province is providing \$500 million over a ten-year period in Treaty 8 territory, working with all eight Treaty 8 Nations. Treaty 8 restoration funding mandating work is required to complete the restoration agreements to meet the \$500 million commitments for seven of the eight Treaty 8 First Nations (not Blueberry River). Negotiations continue regarding how Treaty 8 and the Province will develop the restoration commitment going forward and this work will be a focus for 2025.

Blueberry River First Nations and the Province have agreed to create a separate fund for Blueberry River-led restoration. These restoration funds are intended to heal the land and the people and address the cumulative effects of development in Treaty 8 territory. Funding is over and above existing and future obligations of B.C. and industry.

Media interest: Negotiations between the Province and Treaty 8 (along with Blueberry River First Nations) has been of high interest for provincial and national media for a number of years.

Communications Director responsible: Leanne Ritchie
Responsible program: ADM Carolyn Kamper
Prepared by: Kim Hudson

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

Treaty 8 Funding Consensus Document

SPEAKING POINTS

- In 2023, government signed multiple historic agreements with Treaty 8 First Nations.
- Implementing these agreements, based on a co-developed approach to address cumulative impacts of industrial development on Treaty Rights, is important work to right past wrongs and uphold Constitutionally protected Treaty Rights of Treaty 8 First Nations.
- This is important work for all of us. It's about leaving the land in a good way for future generations to ensure all Treaty 8 First Nation members can meaningfully exercise their rights, while building a healthy, stable, and secure future everyone.
- My ministry has a key role to work with Treaty 8 First Nations to co-develop a new fiscal framework to support the operation of Treaty 8 First Nations governments.
- Implementation of these agreements are not without their challenges. A transformative shift in natural resource management, in collaboration with Treaty 8, takes time and we are doing the work we need to do.
- We will continue engaging all residents in the region to ensure transparency. Everyone has a role in understanding, upholding and respecting Treaty 8.

BACKGROUND

Consensus Document

- Between January and April 2023, the Province and seven of the eight Treaty 8 First Nations (excluding Blueberry River First Nations) signed Letters of Agreement based on a co-developed approach to address cumulative impacts of industrial development on treaty rights.
 - This co-developed approach was named the "Consensus Document," for six Treaty 8 Nations (Doig River, Fort Nelson, Halfway River, Saulteau, and West Moberly First Nations) and the Province. There was also the "Workplan" between McLeod Lake Indian Band and the Province.
 - A separate Implementation Agreement was signed with Blueberry River First Nations.
- The Consensus Document approach lays out a comprehensive path for our governments to meet the expectations of the court in the Yahey decision and work together on a variety of initiatives to evolve the management of lands and resources in Treaty 8 territory in a way that respects Treaty 8 rights and upholds

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

the solemn promises that Treaty 8 beneficiaries have the ability to meaningfully practice their rights, while balancing economic and environmental interests, and local jobs.

- WLRS is leading the overall implementation in partnership with four other natural resource ministries with responsibility for implementing commitments from the Consensus Document, including MIRR.
- Key priorities for MIRR from the Consensus Document include a new revenue-sharing approach to support the priorities of Treaty 8 First Nations communities, and actions to promote respect for Treaty 8 through collaborative anti-racism, awareness building and education initiatives.

Negotiation G2Gs with Treaty 8 Nations

- While the Letters of Agreement expired in March 2024, the shared objectives of the Consensus Document continue through our government-to-government relationships with Treaty 8 Nations.
- In September 2024, the Province entered into a renewed New Relationship and Reconciliation Agreement with Saulteau First Nation which continues the outstanding commitments from the Consensus Document. The Province is negotiating government-to-government agreements with other Treaty 8 Nations and has initiated engagement with Halfway River, West Moberly, Doig River and Fort Nelson First Nations.

Honouring the Treaty

- A working group comprised of provincial staff and representatives from several Treaty 8 Nations is developing initiatives to promote Treaty 8 awareness and anti-racism through visibility and signage projects, as well as developing training and education and communications strategies

Cumulative Effects & Restoration (WLRS lead)

- A Cumulative Impacts Order (effective September 1, 2024) requires decision-makers to consider and mitigate cumulative impacts, with a three-year implementation plan.
- Through the set of initiatives in the Consensus Document, the Province has committed to implementing a cumulative effects regime that will create ways to assess and manage the cumulative impacts of industrial and resource development, while enabling future responsible resource development and economic activity in the Northeast.
- This Cumulative Impact Order is only a first step, as full management of cumulative effects will require partnership with Treaty 8 Nations to complete stewardship and land use plans enabling sustainable responsible resource development.

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

- Restoration is a key pillar to ensuring the meaningful exercise of Treaty 8 rights. To date \$147 million has been provided to Treaty 8 partners (less Blueberry). WLRS is the lead on Restoration activities and questions should be deferred to that Ministry.

Revenue Sharing

- In September 2024 the Province entered into new two-year Revenue Sharing Agreements with seven of the Treaty 8 First Nations (excluding Blueberry River First Nations) while the Province works on co-developing a new fiscal framework.
- The 2024-26 Revenue Sharing Agreements have commitments to share revenues made from PNG royalties, rents and tenure sales, minimum annual payments, and additional capacity funding for West Moberly, Sauleau, McLeod Lake, Doig River, Halfway River, Prophet River, and Fort Nelson First Nations to fully participate in stewardship, restoration, and consultation activities.

Primary Contact

Dale Morgan, acting CN
Negotiations and Regional Operations Division
Cell: 250 219-7095

ADM Responsible

Carolyn Kamper
Negotiations and Regional Operations Division
Cell: 250-208-9482

2025/26 Estimates Debate

Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

.....

Issue: Blueberry River First Nations (BRFN) Implementation Agreement

Recommend Response:

- In January 2023, government signed the Blueberry River First Nations (BRFN) Implementation Agreement (BIA).
- The BIA aims to substantively address infringements declared upon Blueberry's treaty rights in the 2021 *Yahey* decision due to the cumulative impacts of industrial development.
- It is our obligation to better protect BRFN's Treaty 8 rights, and honour the treaty signed over 100 years ago on behalf of Canadians.
- WLRS is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the implementation of the BIA in partnership with the natural resource sector.
- The Province is working with BRFN to reach an agreement on BRFN's civil claim on the first operational land use plan (Gundy Complex) while actively involved with BRFN on completing the Upper Halfway and Grizzly Creek operational land use plans by March 31, 2025.

Additional Response points (if needed):

- The BIA and the Consensus Document are complex and include initiatives that have never been done before.
- January 2025 was the second anniversary of these historic agreements, and we know that implementation has had its challenges. We look forward to the three-year review, coming up this fall.
- We are working very closely with all Treaty 8 Nations to implement these agreements.
- This work will transform how the Province and First Nations steward land, water and resources together to better

2025/26 Estimates Debate

Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

.....

manage for cumulative effects and ensure Treaty rights are upheld.

- Industry engagement and input to the implementation of the specific initiatives has been very valuable. This is most noticeable in new development planning initiatives.
- These historic agreements will guide a partnership approach to land, water and resource stewardship that ensures First Nations can meaningfully exercise their Treaty 8 rights and provide stability and predictability for industry and communities in the region.
- The overall objective of our work in the Northeast is to address the declarations from Justice Burke and to provide a stable basis to support Treaty rights, and economic development.

Key Facts:

- Wildlife: The Wildlife Working Group (WWG) formed in 2023, remains paused at BRFN's request, with no set date for reconvening.
- Water: The BRFN Environmental Flow Needs (EFN) Framework is in its pilot phase, but a lack of strategic oversight is limiting effective coordination and delivery of Schedule P commitments. Administrative Monetary Penalties for *Water Sustainability Act* compliance issues are now active.
- Restoration: The Blueberry River Restoration Society (BRRS), created in March 2023, is collaborating with the Province to advance restoration priorities aligned with the BIA.
- Revenue Sharing: Fixed revenue-sharing payments were made to BRFN for three years, as they did not opt into the Treaty 8 formula in years two or three.

Date Prepared/Revised: February 19, 2025

Ministry Executive Sponsor:

Name: David Muter, Assistant Deputy Minister

Phone: 250-217-5385

Alternate Contact for Issue:

Name: James Cuell, Executive Director

Phone: 250-877-1615

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and
Reconciliation

Date: October 18, 2024

Minister Responsible: Hon. Christine Boyle

Treaty 8 - Treaty Land Entitlement claims

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- In 2023, the B.C. government, federal government and five Treaty 8 Nations finalized Treaty Land Entitlement agreements.
- The settling of the Treaty Land Entitlement claims is a historic step towards reconciliation in the Peace River area and will help build healthy communities and prosperous, sustainable economies.
- Local governments, tenure holders and communities have been fully engaged and the land selections have been finalized for most of the Treaty Land Entitlement lands selections.
- Under the settlement agreements, Canada will provide the First Nations compensation for the loss of their lands and costs relating to the claims.
- In addition, the Province will provide approximately 44,266 hectares of Crown land to the First Nations.

If asked: When will the lands be transferred?

- Now that the agreements have been ratified, Canada, B.C. and the First Nations have officially signed the agreements and the process to transfer the lands has begun.
 - Two land parcels have been transferred in Fee Simple and more are poised to be transferred over the coming months. However, transferring all the lands will take many years.

KEY FACTS:

Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) claims are intended to settle land debt owed to First Nations who did not receive all the land they were entitled to under Treaty 8 in 1914. The five First Nations involved are Saulteau, West Moberly, Halfway River, Doig River and Blueberry River. Treaty 8 historic entitlements included a specific quantity of lands per person; however, at the time of the census, many First Nations were away on seasonal hunts and were missed in the count, which impacted their land entitlements.

Public response to settling the Treaty obligations have been mostly positive. Residents from three areas have expressed significant concern over land selections: Charlie Lake, Red Creek and Summit Lake.

On April 15, 2023, representatives from Canada, B.C., and four of the five First Nations (Saulteau, Halfway River, West Moberly and Blueberry River) announced settlement agreements of the First Nations' Treaty Land Entitlements claims at an in-person celebration and media availability held in Vancouver. Doig River and West Moberly First Nations Chiefs were unable to attend in-person but were part of the tripartite news release. West Moberly had representatives speak on behalf of Chief Willson.

Engagement

Treaty Land Entitlement has been discussed publicly since 2016. Every land selection has been presented in multiple formats: public presentations to local governments, Northeast Stakeholder Roundtable meetings, online via the EngageBC (GovTogether) website and community hall meetings.

At a Northeast Stakeholder Roundtable in November 2021, the Province presented its "what we heard report" to summarize the engagement on West Moberly, Halfway River, Doig River and Blueberry River TLE selections. In November 2022, the Province held open houses at Moberly Lake to discuss with the public Saulteau's land selections. There has been little public concern with Saulteau's land selections.

At a July 20, 2023 Peace River Regional District (PRRD) board meeting, provincial representatives reiterated to board members the Province's intentions to inform the public on the process of land transfer selection. An additional meeting between provincial representatives and the PRRD was held in October 2023, where a variety of topics were discussed, including TLE.

Agreements

The TLE settlement consists of two types of agreements: settlement agreements and land agreements.

The settlement agreements release Canada and B.C. from future TLE obligations, contain details of the cash amounts Canada is contributing, and outline what the ratification process will look like. Overall, there are three settlement agreements as some of the First Nations have negotiated together:

- Doig River and Blueberry River First Nations,
- West Moberly and Halfway River First Nations, and
- Saulteau First Nations.

Each First Nation will also sign individual lands agreements, which will contain details of which parcels of land are being transferred to each First Nation.

There are two types of TLE land categories: Shortfall Lands and Additional Lands. Shortfall lands are owed for over 100 years as part of Treaty 8 for Federal Reserve creation. Additional lands are sold at fair market value as part of reconciliation for Treaty Land Entitlement as fee simple (private) or Federal Reserve land. All lands under consideration would come from what are currently provincial Crown lands.

8,432 ha of Shortfall Lands are the estimated amount of land owed to the five First Nations based on their populations in 1914. These lands will be transferred as Additions to Reserve. Shortfall Lands provide all resources, both surface and subsurface. Any existing tenures on these lands that continue after the transfer will receive an equivalent federal tenure that will be negotiated between the tenure holder, First Nation and the federal government. This primarily affects the oil and gas sector on only a few parcels.

Furthermore, approximately 40,000 ha of Crown lands are available for purchase as Additional Lands as a reconciliation gesture to help repair relationships, address a 100-year injustice, and provide economic, cultural and social opportunity to the First Nations. Approximately 50% of the Additional Lands will become addition to reserves. These parcels will first be purchased then added to reserve via the federal "additions to reserve" policy. Additional Lands only provide surface rights to the First Nation, subsurface rights are not included.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

Offers from Canada and B.C. to settle TLE

TLE First Nation	Cash Offer (Canada)	Shortfall land — B.C. (ha)	Additional Land — B.C. (ha)	Total land (ha)
Saulteau	\$123,458,278	1,308.80	1,7692.50	19,001.30
Halfway River/West Moberly	\$185,389,086	1,941.28	10,141.83	12,083.11
Blueberry River/Doig River	\$488,144,736	4,310.25	10,815.53	15,125.77
Total	\$796,992,100	7,560.33	38,649.86	46,210.18

Media Interest: Provincial media interest prior to the 2023 TLE announcement provided minimal to moderate coverage. In June 2022, there were several articles published by regional outlets regarding the statement from Blueberry River and Doig First Nations that they reached a TLE agreement. The April 2023 TLE announcement garnered wide provincial, national and international news coverage.

Communications Director responsible: Leanne Ritchie

Responsible program: ADM Carolyn Kamper

Prepared by: Kaitlyn Engholm

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

T̓silhqot'in National Government: GNPA Implementation and DTA

SPEAKING POINTS

- **The Province is fully committed to working with the T̓silhqot'in [tsill-COAT-teen] National Government and Canada to implement the renewed Gwets'en Nilt'I [GWET-sen NEEL-ti] Pathways Agreement. Together, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Supreme Court Decision last June, on the territory.**
- **We share an interest in a long-term, orderly transition in the Declared Title Area; negotiating additional lands subject to T̓silhqot'in ownership, management, and control; and supporting shared decision-making throughout the territory.**
- **Implementation is being undertaken in a transparent manner by engaging with local governments and affected stakeholders so there is a common understanding of next steps.**
- *(If asked about Guide Outfitters in the DTA)* **The Province acknowledges Guide Outfitters face uncertainty, and it is important for us to work with TNG and the Guide Outfitters to address this. The Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) continues to lead efforts on policies for tenures and authorizations, including Guide Territory Certificates. My ministry will support WLRS in engagement with guide outfitters.**
- *(If asked about Farwell Canyon/Chilcotin River slide)* **The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness is the coordinating ministry for the Collaborative Emergency Management Agreement, supporting improving emergency management, and enhancing the role and capacity of the T̓silhqot'in in mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery pillars of emergency management, and exploring partnership opportunities.**
- **The Chilcotin River slide was an example of the challenges in resolving overlap, in this case between the T̓silhqot'in and the Secwepemc Nations when working in emergency response and recovery. This highlights the need for BC to work with the First Nations Leadership Council and First Nations governments to resolve overlap and I am committed to undertaking this work.**

BACKGROUND

- The T̓silhqot'in Nation (TN), (population <4200) includes six First Nation communities: Xeni Gwet'in (*hun-ai whu-teen*), T̓si Deldel (*sigh-del-del*), ?Esdilagh (*Ess-dey-lah*), Yunešit'in (*you-neh-se-teen*), Tl'esqox (*Tlay-koh*) and Tl'etinqox (*Clay-teen-ko*).

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

- June 26, 2014, the Supreme Court of Canada (**SCC**) granted a declaration of Aboriginal title to the TN, the first in Canada. The 1,700 km² DTA is in Xení Gwet'in's caretaker area. It did not address Aboriginal title throughout TN territory.
- BC and TNG entered the Nenqay Deni Accord (**NDA**) in 2016. When Canada joined reconciliation discussions in 2019, the trilateral GNPA replaced the NDA. The GNPA includes many NDA commitments and provides TN, BC, and Canada a framework collaborate on strategic priorities and advance TN's path of self-determination.
 - The GNPA supports work in TNG's "pillars": T̓silhqot'in Governance; Strong T̓silhqot'in Culture and Language; Healthy Children and Families; Justice, Education and Training; T̓silhqot'in **nen** (Lands, Water, and Resources); Sustainable Economic Base. Eleven ministries regularly work with TNG.
 - In 2024, the GNPA was renewed for five years. BC provided TNG with \$56.5M over five years; \$40.5M to support implementation, and \$16M to purchase two ranches. Canada provided \$36M to TNG for GNPA implementation. TNG and the communities request and receive additional funds.
 - While the SCC Decision determined the DTA, the GNPA reduces tensions for the transition of title, and provides a pathway to negotiate **Category A** Lands (lands under TN ownership, management, and control) and shared-decision making elsewhere in TN territory (**Category B** Lands).
- BC has renewed efforts to address commitments using existing resources. The ADM-level **nen Transformation Table**, co-led by TNG and WLRS, establishes strategic and transformative direction on lands. Defer to WLRS regarding nen.
- The TN have not consented to guide outfitting within title lands since 2019. WLRS continues to lead the work regarding authorizations and tenures in the DTA. Defer to WLRS regarding authorizations and GTCs, including compensation.
- Confidential negotiations explore long-term resolution to address TNG's opposition to Taseko's proposed New Prosperity mine.
- The 2024 Chilcotin River slide exacerbated long-standing tensions near Farwell Canyon between the Northern Secwepemc te Qelmucw (**NStQ**) and the TN related to fishing and other rights. BC worked separately with the NStQ and TN regarding food security, salmon recovery, and emergency response and recovery actions. Tl'esqox and Yunešit'in received \$66K for salmon.
 - In March 2023, BC provided \$5M to TNG to support advanced planning and design work of a nation-led emergency facilities center.
 - TNG posted a series of learnings for T̓silhqot'in governance from the slide. An event with UBC researchers on February 24 included requests to establish two reserve funds to prepare for future events and called for

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

consultation and cooperation requirements for all Ministries related to emergency management. Defer Farwell and CEMA questions to EMCR.

- Yuneŝit'in purchased Deer Creek Ranch with federal funds for a Healing and Wellness Centre. Combining Tŝilhqot'in culture and ways of healing and western science to support wellbeing at the Nation, family and individual level, the Centre is envisioned to provide a place on the land to heal.
 - In 2024/25, IRR provided \$75K for a Program Manager to support engagement and detailed planning. In 2023/24, the former Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions (**MMHA**) provided \$455K, coupled with \$150K from the First Nations Health Authority, to support two years of planning and design for a healing centre. In the fall of 2024, MMHA signed a Letter of Understanding to support TNG's vision for healing and wellness, including the proposed Tŝilhqot'in Healing and Wellness Centre.

Primary Contact

Richard Toperczer
Chief Negotiator, MIRR South Area
Cell: Government

ADM Responsible

Carolyn Kamper
NROD
Cell: (778) 698-8835

MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

2025 Estimates Note

MOU between BC and the Union of BC Municipalities on Agreements and Other Initiatives with First Nations

SPEAKING POINTS

- On September 18, 2024, the Province and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) renewed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) committing to work together to advance lasting and meaningful reconciliation with First Nations.
- The MOU highlights reconciliation as a shared, cross-government responsibility. Ministries are encouraged to uphold the MOU as they develop agreements and other initiatives with First Nations.
- UBCM members have raised concerns about the awareness and participation of local and regional governments on First Nations negotiations and other Indigenous initiatives.
- To address these concerns, the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs established a working group with UBCM to operationalize the MOU.
- The working group is taking a solutions-oriented approach to this work. They meet regularly to advance the implementation of the MOU, and inform the inclusion of local and regional governments when the Province is negotiating and/or developing agreements and other initiatives with First Nations.

BACKGROUND

- The MOU was last renewed in 2021 after the passing of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*. The renewal confirmed UBCM's support for advancing reconciliation with First Nations throughout the province at the local level and underscores local governments' role as valued partners in advancing reconciliation.
- Local and regional governments have highlighted the need for renewed commitments between parties to advance new approaches that ensure all parties will have the opportunity to support the advancement of reconciliation.
- The MOU will help the Province meet its commitment for sincere and meaningful engagement with local governments and First Nations as we move forward together to build strong communities.

Primary Contact

Ruth Forsythe
Inter-Governmental Relations & Stakeholder Engagement
Cell: Government

ADM Responsible

Ann Marie Sam
RTSD
Cell: Government
Financial

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Date: Feb. 10, 2025

Minister Responsible: Hon. Christine Boyle

Increased supports for urban Indigenous Peoples

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- **We continue to work with urban Indigenous partners to establish an engagement model for urban Indigenous leaders to communicate and collaborate with the Province, including at an annual gathering.**
- **We understand that more needs to be done to address the needs of urban Indigenous people and are committed to work in partnership with urban Indigenous partners.**
- **We want to take the time with our partners to ensure we get this right.**

If asked about the Oct. 2024 BC Gathering of Urban Indigenous Coalitions:

- **Ministry staff attended a private gathering of urban Indigenous coalitions that took place in October 2024.**
- **Following the gathering, a related report with recommendations was shared with the Province.**
- **This report contains recommendations that help to outline a path towards establishing an engagement model with urban Indigenous people.**
- **The ministry is actively working with coalitions to implement these priority actions.**

If asked about the status of the table:

- **The provincial gathering of urban Indigenous coalitions provided space for B.C.'s four coalitions to consider what might be possible in establishing an engagement model with urban Indigenous people.**
- **Important groundwork has been laid, which builds on Indigenous-led urban Indigenous leadership dialogues which were held in 2023 and resulted in a "What We Heard Report" delivered to the Province in October 2023.**

- **The Provincial Urban Leaders Working Group continues to meet regularly.**
- **We also continue to work with urban Indigenous partners to discuss the formation of an engagement model for urban Indigenous leaders.**
- **The engagement model will seek to address the intent of Declaration Act Action Plan priorities in creating a space that encourages communication and collaboration between the Province and urban Indigenous people.**
- **We recognize that this is challenging work, from which difficult conversations sometimes arise, and we want to work through these challenges together in support of all urban Indigenous people.**

If asked about further funding requests:

- **We continue to work with urban Indigenous partners to establish an engagement model for urban Indigenous leaders to communicate and collaborate with the Province, including at an annual gathering.**
- **Any funding requests will be carefully thought through before making any decisions.**

KEY FACTS:

In meetings with the Province, B.C.'s urban Indigenous coalitions continue mention that they believe an unstable provincial funding model indicates B.C. places little value on coalitions and only wants a transactional approach.

Action 4.21 in the Declaration Act Action Plan is "to bring together key Indigenous urban leaders to create a provincial urban Indigenous advisory table to develop and implement a five-year plan to address priorities of urban Indigenous Peoples...." Feedback shared in early engagement relayed that pre-supposing the formation of an advisory table may be perceived as a representational appointment, which caused significant discomfort for urban Indigenous partners as it goes against Indigenous-led principles of engagement. As a result, Ministry staff have begun referring to the work as establishing an engagement model to communicate and collaborate with the Province.

Intergovernmental Communications

The Victoria Urban Indigenous Leadership Table (Victoria Coalition) staffed by the Victoria Native Friendship Centre (VNFC) has led this work and developed a workplan for next steps based on the "What We Heard Report" released in October 2023 which followed three engagement sessions (Dec. 1, 2022, Feb. 22, 2023 and June 1, 2023). Priorities in this report will help guide the future work related to the table (Action 4.21) and annual meetings between the B.C. government and urban Indigenous service organization leaders (Action 4.22). In early October 2023, the Province received the report, which is posted [online](#).

To date, the Province has provided \$810,000 over two years, (including a \$500,000 contribution from SDPR) to the VNFC. This funding sponsored dialogue sessions to bring together self-identified urban Indigenous leaders to inform the development of a provincial urban Indigenous advisory table.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

The \$500,000 supports monthly Working Group Meetings, which include all partners who are working on the goal of establishing a Table, as well as VNFC-led efforts which will help develop more awareness of urban Indigenous people. The working group has met monthly since June 2023, and continues to build relationships and work on key activities from the draft workplan. The current workplan completes at the end of 2024, and the Working Group is strategizing on next steps, which may include a broader group of participants from throughout the Province.

Background:

B.C.'s urban Indigenous coalitions and the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres have been advocating for the need for specific engagement, as 81.7% of Indigenous people live off reserve and 71% of Indigenous people live in urban settings (Statistics Canada, 2021). Actions 4.21 – 4.24 in the Declaration Act Action Plan relate directly to urban Indigenous Peoples and include:

- 4.21 - bringing together key Indigenous urban leaders to create a provincial urban Indigenous advisory table to develop and implement a five-year plan to address priorities of urban Indigenous Peoples, including a focus on Elders, youth, children, women, men, 2SLGBTQQIA+ and persons with disabilities (MIRR and Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR));
- 4.22 - provincial government ministers and executives in the social sector meeting annually with urban Indigenous service organization leaders (MIRR);
- 4.23 - undertaking a cross-government review of provincial supports and services for Indigenous Peoples in urban settings and developing a plan that will provide greater collaboration and coordination to meet needs (MIRR); and
- 4.24 - expanding support to Aboriginal Friendship Centres and other urban Indigenous organizations that serve the needs of urban Indigenous people in B.C.

Additional supports:

BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC)

Funding from MIRR:

[Please note: this funding is not inclusive and that individual Ministries have independent relationships outside of the work of MIRR and that will in some case include funding.]

Annual funding

- \$2.15M – Core operational and capacity funding for the 25 Friendship Centres.
- \$873,800 – Gathering our voices (GOV) event; Elders' transportation; student bursaries and cultural programming; as well as training, growth and capacity building to help expand community partnerships and supports for Friendship Centres (includes \$46,200 allocated to the Unified Aboriginal Youth Collective).

Urban Indigenous Coalitions

- There are four coalitions in B.C.: Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council, Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee, Victoria Urban Reconciliation Dialogue (VURD) and Prince George Urban Indigenous Coalition. Each of the coalitions hosts events with their membership and the greater community to engage urban Indigenous people more broadly.
- The four coalitions receive \$112,500 in annual funding from Indigenous Services Canada as well as funds from Province described below.

FY 2024/25

- \$400,000 (\$100,000, an increase from previous year's 75,000/coalition) from the Indigenous Funding Program allocated from MIRR to each of the four urban Indigenous Coalitions in Victoria, Vancouver, Surrey and Prince George. Funding is used to support members engagement with

the Declaration Act Action Plan and participation in Action Plan item 4.21. NOTE: agreements have been signed with all four coalitions.

- \$20,000 in capacity funding for the Surrey Coalition to advance the goal of an Indigenous Gathering Place in Surrey B.C. through informed community engagements.

Communications Contact: Leanne Ritchie

Program Area Contact(s): Susan Kelly, Cam Filmer

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and
Reconciliation

Date: February 6, 2025

Minister Responsible: Hon. Christine Boyle

Wet'suwet'en Reconciliation & MOU

KEY MESSAGES – GENERAL:

- Work is ongoing to address matters of Wet'suwet'en rights and title outstanding since the Delgamuukw-Gisday-wa decision 27 years ago.
- Any pathway to implementation of Wet'suwet'en rights and title will require work on reunification.
- The Province continues to support the various Wet'suwet'en entities to work together, understanding there has been some positive progress in this regard.

KEY MESSAGES – PROGRESS:

- Provincial negotiators remain resolute in the commitment to undertake this important work at the rights and title table, together with the Wet'suwet'en and Government of Canada.
- Indigenous self-determination is a key tenet of the UN Declaration and a key objective of the Declaration Act. The Province encourages Wet'suwet'en to work together.
- Resolving Wet'suwet'en rights and title will help avoid conflicts on the land, heal the community, and benefit everyone who lives in the region.

KEY MESSAGES – MOU:

- Signed in 2020, a government-to-government-to-government understanding – a MOU – has outlined the work all parties must do to advance reconciliation.
- In 2021, the Province provided \$7.22 million through the Office of the Wet'suwet'en to support their work under the MOU, which includes expanding governance capacity, engaging in unity-building activities, and participating in ongoing negotiations to reconcile rights and title.
- The Province continues to encourage that funds are used to support initiatives that promote unity. Unity is the way forward. Governance matters of the Wet'suwet'en Nation must be resolved by Wet'suwet'en people – that is central to self-determination.

- **Regardless of the MOU, the Province is committed to implementing Wet'suwet'en rights and title, and to working with Canada to do so.**
- **Reunification within Wet'suwet'en Nation is essential for reconciliation move forward successfully.**
- **There is an important role for all Wet'suwet'en entities in this process.**
- **Any solutions must involve the Wet'suwet'en people, which includes Wet'suwet'en Hereditary and elected leaders.**

KEY FACTS:

There are six Wet'suwet'en entities that have asserted rights and title on behalf of Wet'suwet'en members – the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs, as well as five Wet'suwet'en Indian Act bands. The Province has been engaging in regular dialogue with the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs (HC), representatives from the Office of the Wet'suwet'en (OW), and representatives from Wet'suwet'en elected bands, to encourage Wet'suwet'en reunification and broad participation in a dialogue to implement Wet'suwet'en rights and title.

Through the May 2020 Memorandum of Understanding, BC, Canada, and the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs have committed to a process to implement Wet'suwet'en rights and title on the basis that title is held by Wet'suwet'en houses on behalf of their members. The Wet'suwet'en elected councils do not support the MOU.

The MOU was signed in attempt to address the need for the Wet'suwet'en to unify and in response to Canada-wide protests related to the Coastal GasLink (CGL) pipeline. Five of six Wet'suwet'en bands had voiced their support the CGL pipeline for while some Wet'suwet'en HC have expressed their opposition to the project and engaged in direct action to prevent its construction. In 2021, the Province signed an agreement with the OW for \$7.22 million to implement five priority areas identified by the HCs, including governance capacity and unity building activities. This three-year funding agreement was extended for an additional year, to March 31, 2025.

Recent correspondence

Intergovernmental Communications

Minister Boyle met with Wet'suwet'en First Nation at the First Nations Leaders' Gathering in Jan. 2025 where concerns around the MOU was discussed.

Media Interest: The topics of the CGL pipeline and Wet'suwet'en peoples has garnered substantial media attention over the years. Most recently, the abuse of process application brought by Sleydo', also known as Molly Wickham, and members of a blockade who were found guilty of criminal contempt of court for stopping work on the CGL pipeline continues to be highlighted in the news in Sept. 2024. Amnesty International named Wet'suwet'en Chief Dsta'hyil as their first prisoner of conscience held in Canada, and The Tyee focused on a privacy breach related to the conflicts in Aug. 2024. News articles continued to be published regarding the CGL protests.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

Communications Director responsible: Leanne Ritchie

Responsible program: DM Tom McCarthy

Prepared by: Kim Hudson