



20 Urgent Calls for Climate Action

“ We need a genuine, progressive movement that truly understands and fully acknowledges that we are in the midst of a *climate crisis*. It’s having devastating effects on our communities, on our people, and *communities are burning to the ground*. How many more communities have to be incinerated before governments will begin to move beyond good intentions and rhetoric? ”

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, Union of BC Indian Chiefs

1

In response to the current climate emergency, strengthen provincial and federal climate measures to **meet the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s recommendations** to limit human-caused global warming to 1.5°C and support First Nations to prepare for current and future climate impacts.

2

Review and reform all provincial and federal climate-related legislation, regulations, policies, programs, and engagement frameworks to address barriers, impacts, and limitations on the assertion of First Nations’ Title, Rights, Treaty Rights, and inherent jurisdiction in climate planning and response. This involves the recognition and use of First Nations laws and legal processes and their ability to uphold their responsibilities to the land, waters, and environment.

3

Work collaboratively to **build long-term climate capacity** within First Nations communities to effectively respond to the climate emergency. This involves immediately establishing a BC First Nations Climate Council to lead implementation of the Strategy, conducting a provincial First Nations climate capacity assessment to assess disparities and challenges, and increasing Crown government investments specific to First Nations capacity building.

4

Create a **BC First Nations Climate Fund** with initial investments as outlined in the Strategy.

5

Support the creation of **climate-related positions** (such as climate change coordinators) **and programming** (Indigenous Guardians, fisheries authorities, water monitoring programs) within First Nations communities. This involves supporting interested First Nations in the development and implementation of climate data frameworks and the generation of their own baseline data.

6

Strengthen the **incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge** in climate change initiatives. Ensure engagement with Elders and/or Knowledge Holders in all state-led climate discussions and response initiatives, support and facilitate intergenerational knowledge sharing with First Nations youth, and support the creation of Nation-specific climate glossaries inclusive of traditional language(s) and teachings.

7

Continue to **empower and prepare First Nations youth** for projected climate impacts through training, mentorship, and advocacy opportunities. Increase representation of First Nations youth in state-led climate discussions and response initiatives, including the development of programs, projects, and policies.

8

Establish a **regional network and discussion forum for First Nations on climate change** to provide mutual support between Nations, create space for climate discussions and information sharing, and help to develop regional and provincial climate alliances. This involves hosting an annual BC First Nations Climate Gathering.

9

Identify areas and critical wildlife habitats requiring immediate restoration and protection due to resource extraction (logging, mining) agriculture, other urban/industrial development, and climate change. Support **First Nation-led conservation and protection** efforts in this regard, including the designation of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas, which can act as carbon sinks, and establish preventative measures such as **laws or policies at the Nation level** enforcing cleanup and remediation of disturbed lands and waters.

10

Transform resource extraction (logging, mining) and other urban/industrial development processes and tenure systems to ensure:

- FPIC is obtained from all First Nations whose territories (lands, waters, environments, and all beings) may be impacted by a proposed project.
- FPIC is fully informed through honest, transparent, and independent representations of all projected impacts, including those compounded as a result of climate change.
- Early and ongoing engagement throughout the entire scope of a project with early and sufficient notice to review data and information received as well as the ability for First Nation-led assessments and research on a particular issue.
- Appropriate integration of First Nations knowledge and laws into project work, including permitting and decision-making.

11

Protect Old Growth forests, in recognition of their role as carbon sinks, in water retention, species protection and survival, human health, and combating climate change. Prohibit logging in floodplains and critical areas of watersheds to prevent droughts, floods, and landslides.

12

Conduct a BC First Nations Infrastructure Assessment to identify and meet infrastructure needs (transportation and communications networks, emergency response, housing and buildings, climate data, water treatment and distribution systems, waste handling and storage) to effectively adapt and

build communities that are resilient to climate impacts. Explore opportunities for green infrastructure development to help reduce GHG emissions.

13

Develop long-term strategies, policies, and implementation tools to enhance **community-led food and food sovereignty systems**, which include the development of food waste management systems to help reduce carbon emissions and ecological footprints.

14

Ensure recovery and restoration of wild salmon stocks to secure First Nations' cultural connection and access to traditional food sources for current and future generations.

15

Support First Nations in **assessing, quantifying, and reducing their GHG emissions** to inform decision-making, develop offset and/or mitigation measures, and explore economic investments.

16

Immediately **strengthen emergency management, response, and recovery systems** within and between First Nations communities by:

- Ensuring emergency management legislation, policies, and programs, such as *BC's Emergency Management Act*, respond to the current climate emergency and are aligned with the UN Declaration and the Declaration Acts.
- Assessing capacity of First Nations communities to respond to climate-related emergencies and implement critical supports needed. This may involve Identifying and implementing critical supports and infrastructure needed in order to reduce risks and vulnerabilities, supporting fire response positions, implementing traditional fire management systems, and more.
- Developing a BC First Nations Regional Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction aligned with the 2015-2030 Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction and the UN Declaration.
- Supporting actions already undertaken by the First Nations Leadership Council and the First Nations Emergency Services Society to implement the Tripartite Emergency Management Memorandum of Understanding.

17

Support First Nations in developing their own **Nation-specific climate-related strategies and action plans** based on their own needs, priorities, and self-determined processes. This includes energy-efficiency strategies, risk assessments, GHG emission reduction plans, heritage protection plans, and/or monitoring and data collection frameworks.

18

Support First Nations to rapidly transition to reliable and affordable renewable, non-combustible and/or low carbon energy sources by establishing Indigenous utilities, diversifying clean energy sources, aligning legislation, regulations, policies and programs with the UN Declaration and Declaration Acts, and increasing Crown government support and investments.

19

Support First Nations in developing **environmentally sustainable and low carbon economic development projects and opportunities**.

20

IMMEDIATELY ensure that all First Nations in BC have **long-term and reliable access to clean and safe food and water sources** both in their homes and within their territories.