

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

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UNION OF B.C. INDIAN CHIEFS
CHIEFS COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 23RD TO 24TH, 2022
VIRTUAL MEETING

Resolution no. 2022-04

RE: Support for the BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan

WHEREAS climate change and environmental destruction have exacerbated systemic social, environmental, and economic injustices by disproportionately affecting First Nations communities in BC;

WHEREAS climate change threatens the security and way of life of Indigenous peoples throughout Canada and the world through the escalating impacts of climate-exacerbated disasters and through the breakdown of the ecological conditions under which human civilizations developed;

WHEREAS First Nations have the right to determine and direct their own environmental strategies and policies concerning the climate crisis and its impacts, as well as the continued development of projects that directly affect the welfare and conservation of their lands, territories, and resources;

WHEREAS the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (the UN Declaration), which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of BC, committed to implement through legislation, affirms:

Article 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.

Article 25: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.

Article 26 (1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.

(2): Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.

(3): States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.

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Article 29 (1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination.

Article 32 (1): Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources

(2): States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.

(3): States shall provide effective mechanisms for just and fair redress for any such activities, and appropriate measures shall be taken to mitigate adverse environmental, economic, social, cultural or spiritual impact;

WHEREAS the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has identified and assessed pathways that are consistent with limiting the effects of global warming to 1.5° C above pre-industrial average global temperatures in order to avoid the most severe impacts of a changing climate;

WHEREAS provincial and federal climate mitigation and adaptation strategies are insufficient in meeting Canada's and BC's emission reduction targets, and include overreliance on unproven technologies concurrent with increased support for fossil fuel production;

WHEREAS by Resolution 2019-02, the UBCIC Chiefs Council directed the UBCIC Executive, working with the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) and the First Nations Summit (FNS) as the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), to prepare and develop a BC First Nations Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (the Strategy) aligned with the IPCC's recommended emissions reduction targets and to establish the importance of ensuring that climate planning protects traditional ecological knowledge; and

WHEREAS the FNLC created an advisory group for and circulated draft versions of the Strategy to First Nations in BC, including presentations at the UBCIC Chiefs Council meetings, and updated the Strategy to be reflective of input from First Nations.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council fully respects and supports First Nations continued exercise and defense of their inherent and constitutionally protected Title, Rights, and Treaty Rights and efforts to ensure the protection of their respective territories amid the ongoing climate emergency;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council fully endorses the joint BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan as presented on February 23, 2022;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council calls upon the provincial and federal governments to work collaboratively with the UBCIC, the First Nations Summit (FNS), and the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN), as the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), and relevant partner organizations to implement the Strategy and First Nations' climate priorities;

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council directs the UBCIC Executive to work with the BCAFN and FNS as the FNLC to plan a climate action session for First Nations in BC that will involve planning to implement the Strategy, subject to funding.

Moved: Chief James Hobart, Spuzzum First Nation
Seconded: Jackie Thomas, Saik'uz First Nation (Proxy)
Disposition: Carried
Date: February 23, 2022