

Joint Call: BC must recommit to meaningful implementation of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

Indigenous Peoples' Human Rights exist independent of provincial legislation. To avoid costly legal battles, BC has the obligation to ensure that the Province's laws, practices, and policies are aligned with these rights through frameworks, processes, and negotiation tables co-developed with Indigenous peoples.

As the world bears witness to political instability, increasingly severe climate impacts, and growing economic insecurity, we, the undersigned, call upon Premier David Eby and his BC NDP Government to fulfill their obligations and commitments to recognizing and implementing the human rights of Indigenous peoples, as required by the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) and BC's own *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (*Declaration Act*) and *Interpretation Act*. Amending the *Declaration Act* or the *Interpretation Act* in an effort to limit their effect would set back our collective reconciliation efforts by decades.

Five years ago, the BC government, under the leadership of Premier John Horgan, championed co-development of the *Declaration Act* alongside Indigenous peoples. BC was the first jurisdiction in Canada to take the necessary step of passing legislation directing the government to implement the UN Declaration and ensure that all provincial laws, policies, and practices are consistent with the inherent rights, standards, and principles of the UN Declaration. This was a significant accomplishment to which many of us stood beside the BC government and celebrated its leadership.

These efforts advanced Canada's international standing and set an example for regional and national governments on how a government can move forward in partnership with Indigenous peoples to address the ongoing legacies of colonialism and ensure a prosperous future for all. The *Declaration Act* was passed unanimously by all Parties in the BC Legislature and was applauded by a wide array of civil society organizations, industry leaders, faith-based organizations, environmental groups, municipalities, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike. Today, we are concerned that, despite significant

resources and effort being committed to the implementation of the *Declaration Act*, political will appears to be faltering.

Meaningful implementation of the UN Declaration and *Declaration Act* present significant opportunities to address many of the longstanding challenges our province faces, including addressing the social and economic marginalization of Indigenous peoples, promoting healthier, sustainable, and vibrant communities, increasing local decision-making, accountability, and transparency, tackling climate change and supporting climate resilience, promoting economic growth through certainty and predictable processes, recognizing the historical and contemporary contributions and cultures of Indigenous peoples in this province, and ensuring that Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike hold the same opportunity to participate, lead, and benefit in the future prosperity of this province.

We are deeply troubled by the recent rise in anti-Indigenous rhetoric and fearmongering in this province that has framed the realization of the fundamental human rights of Indigenous peoples as detrimental to economic growth, security, and the interests of others. We stand united in opposition to these divisive narratives. We believe that our futures are intertwined and our collective prosperity is inextricably linked. Questions still remain on what implementation of the UN Declaration and *Declaration Act* will look like, but now is not the time to cede ground to those who cynically spread fear and doubt about that vital work. At this time, rather than taking a step back, we look to Premier Eby and his government to lead and remain steadfast in upholding its obligations, commitments, values, and principles, and to take the necessary steps forward in full partnership with Indigenous peoples.

We, the undersigned, stand with Indigenous peoples in BC and call on Premier Eby and his government to recommit to meaningful implementation of the UN Declaration and the *Declaration Act*, and to not amend the *Declaration Act* or the *Interpretation Act*.

Endorsed by:

Barb Nederpel, President, Hospital Employees' Union
Karen Ranalletta, President, CUPE BC
Paul Finch, President, BCGEU - BC General Employees' Union
Cliff Haman, President, Professional Employees Association
Sussanne Skidmore, President, BC Federation of Labour
Carole Gordon, President, British Columbia Teachers' Federation
Sarah Kooner, President, Health Sciences Association of BC
Stephen von Sychowski, President, Vancouver & District Labour Council
Janet Andrews, Secretary-Treasurer, New Westminster & District Labour Council
Patrick Johnson, President, UFCW 1518

Annette Toth, President, MoveUP
Brett Harper, President, B.C. Union Workers' Union (BCUWU)
Hannah Dwyer, BC Regional Coordinator, National Farmers Union BC
Amanda Burrows, Executive Director, First United
Monica McKinlay, Lead Pastor, Grandview Church
Jessica Clogg, Executive Director & Senior Counsel, West Coast Environmental Law
Mark Gifford, Real Estate Foundation of BC
Dr. Sara Ghebremusse, Assistant Professor, Peter A. Allard School of Law and Academic Director,
UBC Future Minerals Initiative
Liza Hughes, Executive Director, BC Civil Liberties Association
Howard Sapers, Executive Director, Canadian Civil Liberties Association
Ketty Nivyabandi, Amnesty International Canada Section, English Speaking
Randall Cohn, Executive Director, Pivot Legal Society
Angela Marie MacDougall, BWSS Battered Women's Support Services
Jacqui Mendes, Executive Director, Community Legal Assistance Society
Alice Kendall, Executive Director, Downtown Eastside Women's Centre
Sacia Burton & Chantelle Spicer, Co-Provincial Directors, BC Poverty Reduction Coalition
David Suzuki, Grandfather
John Vaillant, Journalist and Author
Robert Bateman, Artist
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Southeast Alaska Indigenous Transboundary Commission (SEITC)
Kate Lawes, Parents4climate
Elza Kephart, Organizer, RBC Off Screen
Gina Morris, Spokesperson, Kamloops Moms for Clean Air
Will Patric, Executive Director, Rivers Without Borders
Annabel Webb, President/Co-founder, Justice for Girls
Nicole Kief, Executive Director, Prisoners' Legal Services
Chad Hughes, Executive Director, Elk River Alliance
Pierre Iachetti, Executive Director, David Suzuki Foundation
Shelley Luce, Campaigns Director, Sierra Club BC
Robyn Duncan, Executive Director, Wildsight
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Kat Hartwig, Executive Director, Living Lakes Canada
Tim Morris, Project Director, BC Water Legacy – MakeWay Charitable Society
Jamie Kneen, MiningWatch Canada
Douglas Gook, Director, FORPA Forest Protection Allies
Eve Saint, Co-founder/Lead Coordinator, 8th Fire Rising
Bulkley Valley Stewardship Coalition
Kai Nagata, Energy Campaigner, Dogwood
Elizabeth May, MP for Saanich-Gulf Islands/Green Party of Canada Leader
Emily Lowan, Leader of the BC Greens
Vicky Law, Executive Director, Rise Women's Legal Centre
Ben Simoni, Youth Climate Corps BC
Julia Hill Sorochan, Executive Director, SkeenaWild Conservation Trust
Gabrielle Legault, Assistant Professor, Indigenous Studies, UBC Okanagan
Kendra Strauss, Director, The Labour Studies Program, Simon Fraser University
Kimberly Shearon, Executive Director, Ecojustice
Beatrice Frank, Georgia Strait Alliance
Shawn Wilson, Associate Professor of Indigenous Studies, UBC Okanagan
Amanda Adams and Iglia Ivanova, Co-Executive Directors, BC Policy Solutions
Les Kojima, President, National Association of Japanese Canadians
Councillor Teale Phelps Bondaroff, District of Saanich
Jessica Asch & Tara Williamson, Co-Research Directors, Indigenous Law Research Unit
Mary-Woo Sims, LLD Former BC Chief Human Rights Commissioner
Susan Kim, Councillor, City of Victoria
Sarah Otto, Professor, UBC
Cora Beitel, RM, Strathcona Midwifery
Decolonial Solidarity Network
Andrew Dumbrille, Co-Director, Equal Routes
Jeremy Vander Hoek, Indigenous Rights Program Coordinator, Canadian Friends Service
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Sue Cairns, Councillor, City of Kimberley
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Liz McDowell, Senior Campaigns Director, Stand.earth
Justine Nelson, Executive Director, Rivershed Society of BC
Julia Beatty, Chair, Shuswap Climate Action Society
Nigel Bankes, FRSC, Emeritus Professor of Law, University of Calgary
Leslie Payne, City Councillor, City of Nelson
Laura Sacks, Co-founder, West Kootenay Climate Hub
Viveca Ellis, Executive Director, Centre for Family Equity
Irwin Oostindie, Voor Urban Labs
Karen Thomas, President, Wild Bird Trust of BC
Michael Hathaway, Professor of Anthropology, Simon Fraser University
The Very Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne, Member - Heiltsuk First Nation, Former Moderator - The
United Church of Canada
Dr. Linda Thyer & Dr. Douglas Courtemanche, Doctors for Planetary Health - West Coast

Board of Directors, North Island Pride Society
Kent McNeil, Professor, Osgoode Hall Law School and University of Victoria Faculty of Law
Jennifer Iredale, Board of Directors, Mayne Island Truth and Reconciliation Circle
Richard De Armond, President, Old Hat Arts / Campbell Bay Music Festival Society
Bob Wells, Mayor, City of Courtenay
Nancy Flood, President, BC Nature
Karen Thomas, President, Wild Bird Trust of BC
Jackie Larkin, Elders for Ancient Trees
Sarah Reid, Executive Director, Reciprocity Trusts
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