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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
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Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation  
Tsilhqot'in National Government

### **B.C., Tsilhqot'in continue reconciliation talks**

**TSILHQOT'IN TITLE LANDS** - The Province and the Tsilhqot'in National Government have agreed to finalize a government-to-government agreement by June 26, 2015, that will outline the next steps for reconciliation.

The Supreme Court of Canada decision granting the Tsilhqot'in Aboriginal Title was the first of its kind in Canada. The letter of understanding (LOU) signed by the Tsilhqot'in National Government and B.C. last fall states the parties will make best efforts to negotiate a protocol agreement by March 31, 2015. The additional three-month period enables the Tsilhqot'in and the Province to ensure this complex, unprecedented roadmap to lasting reconciliation is completed.

The Tsilhqot'in National Government and B.C. will continue to focus on matters related to governance; culture and language; long term economic development; healthy children, families and community; justice; education; and land and resource management. The two governments are working together to find innovative negotiated solutions to satisfy the goal of the Tsilhqot'in leadership – to increase the quality of life for their people.

The Province and the Tsilhqot'in National Government will also continue to work to secure the active involvement and support of the federal government, provide further clarity about Title land use for tenure holders, and continue to develop economic sustainability and self-governance for the Tsilhqot'in people.

On June 26, 2014, the Supreme Court of Canada declared Aboriginal Title for the Tsilhqot'in people to approximately 1,700 square kilometres of land in the Chilcotin. Since the court decision, the Tsilhqot'in National Government and the Province have identified priorities and explored options to develop lasting reconciliation while defining the practical steps of transitioning the Title lands to Tsilhqot'in management and control.

Other priority issues defined in the LOU that have been completed include the Province apologizing for wrongfully hanging of six Tsilhqot'in Chiefs in 1864 and 1865 following the Chilcotin War and exonerating the chiefs for any wrongdoing to the extent it is able. Last month, the Tsilhqot'in and the Province announced they had reached an interim agreement enabling guide outfitters to continue operations on the title lands for 2015.

## **Quotes:**

### **Chief Joe Alphonse – Tsilhqot'in National Government Tribal Chairman and Chief of Tl'etinqox:**

"We are committed to having an agreement signed on or by June 26, 2015 – the one year anniversary of our victory at the Supreme Court of Canada – or we will be looking into other options. Our people and our leadership have worked patiently and in good faith for the past several months to try and reach a new understanding with British Columbia that will lead to positive change for our communities and for the entire Province. We need to see some real change. These next three months will be telling of B.C.'s commitment to truly charting a new path in recognition and reconciliation of First Nations interests, with or without the federal government."

### **John Rustad – Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation:**

"The Province's commitment to the long-term goal of lasting reconciliation is unwavering. This work is challenging and important – it requires discussion, consensus-building and negotiation. It is the only option that brings the real possibility of transformation, healing and growth. The Tsilhqot'in people are anxious to see change, and so am I. Designing a change that works for the Tsilhqot'in and all the communities in the Chilcotin means both sides must be flexible, innovative and at the same time, pragmatic. I am confident we can and will make real progress over the next few months."

## **Quick Facts:**

- Six member communities comprise the Tsilhqot'in National Government: Tl'etinqox, ?Esdilagh, Yunesit'in, Tl'esqox, Tsi Del Del and Xeni Gwet'in
- Located in the Chilcotin, the six Tsilhqot'in bands have approximately 3,300 members.

## **Learn More:**

Tsilhqot'in National Government and B.C. Letter of Understanding, visit: <http://ow.ly/Bj1CT>

For information about the interim agreement for guide outfitters, visit: <http://ow.ly/L5nAl>

Tsilhqot'in National Government, visit: [www.tsilhqotin.ca/](http://www.tsilhqotin.ca/)

The Supreme Court of Canada Aboriginal Title decision, visit: <http://ow.ly/L5JD3>

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