



For Immediate Release



Tsilhqot'in National Government
Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation

Tsilhqot'in and B.C. sign historic accord

VANCOUVER – The B.C. government and the Tsilhqot'in Nation have signed a five-year framework agreement that establishes a shared vision, principles and structures to negotiate a comprehensive and lasting reconciliation between the Nation and the Province.

The agreement, named the Nengqay Deni Accord (or the "People's Accord"), outlines eight pillars of reconciliation to be negotiated in a holistic manner, including Tsilhqot'in culture and language, children and families, healthy communities, justice, education and training, lands and resources and economic development.

Joint negotiating tables comprised of senior provincial staff and Tsilhqot'in representatives will be established to make progress in all of these areas while the longer-term negotiations unfold. A leadership table, comprised of Tsilhqot'in chiefs and key ministers, will continue to lead the negotiations.

Crown land within the Tsilhqot'in territory will be part of the negotiation, with no private lands involved. The amount of Crown land will be subject to further negotiations with the Tsilhqot'in.

The Nengqay Deni Accord clarifies the next steps in transitioning the title area to Tsilhqot'in management and control and commits to a joint exploration of economic and social opportunities for the Tsilhqot'in throughout the larger traditional territory.

Within the five-year agreement, there will be considerable opportunity for the Province and the Tsilhqot'in to conduct broader community and stakeholder engagement.

Quotes:

Premier Christy Clark –

"The Province of B.C. has entered into this framework because it holds the promise of a brighter future for the Tsilhqot'in people and the province. A key focus is going to be supporting new economic development for the Tsilhqot'in communities that also makes a positive contribution to the economies of the region and British Columbia."

Chief Joe Alphonse - Tribal Chairman, Tsilhqot'in National Government –

"This is a historic step, but it is only a first step. We view this agreement as a guide for further negotiations. It will provide us with durable resources that will be used to chart a culturally relevant and prideful path for our people – a path that understands the necessity of holding the Tsilhqot'in up, honouring our past and recognizing our future."

"Our people will ultimately have the authority on any agreements that are negotiated out of this. We call on our members, our citizens, to be fully engaged in shaping their future as

Tsilhqot'in. Title to our land was recognized – we won that fight, but the larger fight – the fight for peace – that's the work ahead of us.”

Chief Roger William – Vice Chair, Tsilhqot'in National Government –

“This agreement is about moving forward for our future generations. We have 150 years where no agreements have been signed. This is the first stepping stone in making alliances – in seeing if B.C. is willing and able to make the changes that we as Tsilhqot'in need to see. In signing this agreement we are asking B.C. to commit to improving the lives of the Tsilhqot'in people. Our vision is to build the strength of the Nation, to match the strength of our ?Esggidam (ancestors).”

“To us, this agreement is about building our people up from a history of injustice. The impact of Smallpox, the Tsilhqot'in War, the Indian Act and Residential Schools are all very recent in our history as Nenqayni (First Nations people). We name this agreement the Nenqay Deni Accord to honour our ?Esggidam and to bridge a positive future with our neighbours.”

John Rustad, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation –

“This is progress toward greater certainty on the land base and toward lasting reconciliation. Title has been awarded in part of the traditional territory and this framework agreement supports the practical application of enacting title, sets the conditions for further land use negotiations and sets us on a strong path to reconciliation between our governments.”

Learn More:

Nenqay Deni Accord: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/consulting-with-first-nations/first-nations-negotiations/reconciliation-other-agreements

Tsilhqot'in National Government: www.tsilhqotin.ca/Lands/RightsTitle.htm

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A backgrounder follows.

BACKGROUND

Elements of Nenqay Deni Accord

Social-cultural:

A Social, Cultural, Education and Justice Sub-Table will be established to achieve a shared vision and Social and Cultural Action Plan to improve the health, standard of living and education of the Tsilhqot'in people, while reducing over-representation of Tsilhqot'in citizens within the justice system through innovative prevention strategies and alternative.

Sustainable Economic Base:

With the establishment of an Economic Development Sub-Table, an Economic Action Plan will be drafted, focusing on the improvement of participation in resource development and economic initiatives within the Tsilhqot'in territory.

Lands and Resources:

A lands and resources management framework will be established in support of strategic planning and shared commitments for the territory. Along with strategic planning, B.C. and the Tsilhqot'in National Government commit to negotiating land areas, designated as areas of Tsilhqot'in ownership, management and control within the Tsilhqot'in Territory. This applies to Crown land only. The size and specific geographic location of these lands has not been predetermined.

Declared Aboriginal Title Land:

The Declared Aboriginal title land within the caretaker area of Xenigwet'in will remain within the full management, control and benefit of the Tsilhqot'in Nation. However, a group of senior officials will be tasked with supporting the practical transition of this area from provincial management to Tsilhqot'in ownership and control.

Fish and Wildlife:

A collaborative approach will be taken with fish and wildlife management, inclusive of access management, annual allowable harvest levels, habitat management, wildlife research, monitoring and enforcement.

First Nations Consultation:

The commitments for continuing negotiations under the NDA will be implemented in a manner that recognizes and respects the Aboriginal and Treaty Rights of other First Nations and the Crown's duty to consult and accommodate other First Nations. The Province of B.C. and the Tsilhqot'in Nation have agreed to work in an open and positive manner to attempt to resolve differences, reconcile interests and find mutually agreeable solutions.

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