



BC TREATY COMMISSION

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Says Treaty Commission in presentation to Finance Committee

Treaty completions create economic stimulus effect

OTTAWA – The Treaty Commission today asked the House of Commons finance committee to consider the importance of achieving the economic stimulus effects that will result from completing treaties in British Columbia.

“Settling treaties now results in greater benefits being delivered sooner to First Nations and British Columbians and creates a multiplier effect in the economy,” said Treaty Commission Chief Commissioner Sophie Pierre.

Several independent studies completed over the past decade have identified the significant economic benefits to British Columbians and Canadians from completing treaties, stated the Treaty Commission in its first appearance before the finance committee. Chief Commissioner Pierre was joined before the committee by commissioners Robert Phillips, Jerry Lampert and Dave Haggard.

“We are here to emphasize the direct economic benefits of completing treaties to the Government of Canada,” said Pierre. “We believe that by accelerating treaty completions, the federal government will be making an investment in British Columbia that will create a lasting economic effect that will benefit all British Columbians and Canadians.”

The Treaty Commission’s soon-to-be-released report on the economic impact of treaties will confirm the benefits are substantial. The valuations in the report are based on the three treaties Canada has recently completed in British Columbia, two of which have been ratified.

“If, for example, we were able to complete two treaties rather than one each year for the next 15 years, the net benefit doubles to \$2 billion, and wage income created doubles to \$7 billion over 40 years,” said Pierre. “Imagine the economic benefits if we were to complete four treaties or more each year for the next 15 years.”

Post-treaty, First Nations become self-supporting through their own taxes, earnings and enterprises and will rely less on federal transfers. By completing treaties sooner, the federal government saves the costs incurred through prolonged treaty negotiations. In addition, the lost opportunity costs identified in an earlier study as \$1 billion annually are avoided.

The Treaty Commission recommends three actions for the Government of Canada to take in finalizing the treaties that are close to completion: re-affirm the commitment to treaty making in British Columbia, resolve the fish issues, and remove the barriers preventing treaty completion.

“We believe that resolving these critical issues expeditiously will unlock a treaty completion stimulus effect that will help boost the economy for the benefit of all British Columbians and Canadians,” said Pierre.

About the BC Treaty Commission

The Treaty Commission is the independent body responsible for overseeing treaty negotiations among the governments of Canada, BC and First Nations in BC. It has three roles: facilitation, funding, and public information and education.

Established in 1992, the Treaty Commission and six-stage treaty process are designed to advance treaty negotiations. The Treaty Commission comprises a provincial appointee, a federal appointee, two First Nations Summit appointees and a chief commissioner chosen by agreement of all three parties. For more information about the BC Treaty Commission, please visit bctreaty.net.

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