



BC TREATY COMMISSION

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First Nation issues must remain a priority

VANCOUVER – The re-election of the Liberals to a third term in government is good news for the British Columbia treaty process, according to the BC Treaty Commission.

“The momentum we have gained in treaty negotiations over the past two years can be built upon given the priority the Liberal government has placed on First Nation issues,” said Chief Commissioner Sophie Pierre of the BC Treaty Commission. “The economic benefits that can be achieved through treaties are essential to the overall economic recovery and to the future well being of our province.”

Through its actions, the BC government, under the leadership of Premier Gordon Campbell, has demonstrated a commitment to advance relationships with First Nations both inside and outside the treaty process, said Pierre.

The Treaty Commission expects the BC government to give First Nation issues and treaty negotiations a high priority now that the election is over. One of the immediate challenges for the provincial government will be explaining to British Columbians how the proposed recognition and reconciliation act can help progress in treaty negotiations.

“We look forward to consulting with the parties on how to harmonize the potential of the recognition act with the treaty process and make sure the hard work of the parties at the negotiation tables is maintained and supported,” said Pierre.

Several First Nations are close to concluding final agreements, including In-SHUCK-ch Nation, Sliammon First Nation, Yale First Nation and Yekooche Nation.

Nine First Nations are moving to conclude agreements in principle including K’omoks First Nation, Namgis Nation, Nazko First Nation, Northern Shuswap Treaty Society, Oweekeno Nation, Te’Mexw First Nation, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, and two of the Tsimshian First Nations.

Other First Nations are taking a close look at the two completed treaties – Tsawwassen First Nation and Maa-nulth First Nations – with a view to moving ahead.

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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.