



BC TREATY COMMISSION

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New Minister for B.C.'s treaty negotiations

VANCOUVER – The Treaty Commission is very pleased that George Abbott has been appointed as the new Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation.

The Treaty Commission expects the BC government to give First Nation issues and treaty negotiations a high priority now that its new Cabinet has been selected. “We had a constructive and valued relationship with the previous Minister, Michael de Jong, and we wish him well as Attorney General and House Leader. We look forward to that same kind of relationship and commitment to treaty negotiations from Mr. Abbott,” said Chief Commissioner Sophie Pierre of the BC Treaty Commission. “This sort of commitment must be maintained in order to harness the economic benefits that can be achieved through treaties, to advance relationships with First Nations both inside and outside the treaty process, and to lead our province into economic recovery.”

“We have a lot of work to do in the treaty process, and the Treaty Commission sees it as a positive choice that someone with Mr. Abbott’s experience will be the new Minister charged with treaty negotiations for the Province.” Mr. Abbott was formerly Minister of Health, and has experience in aboriginal issues when he was Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services.

This experience will be necessary as several First Nations are close to concluding final agreements, including In-SHUCK-ch Nation, Sliammon First Nation, Yale First Nation and Yekooche Nation.

The Premier has made The New Relationship with First Nations a priority, and the Treaty Commission sees treaties as advancing these efforts. Nine other 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.