



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Support for treaties growing Treaty Commission advises Minister**

VANCOUVER – The Treaty Commission is pleased that Campbell River MP John Duncan will continue in his role as Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Canada and looks forward to working with him to complete treaties.

Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Minister John Duncan is being advised the time is right to complete treaties with support in BC at its highest level since the Treaty Commission began polling in 1999.

The Treaty Commission is asking Minister Duncan to energize the federal effort to conclude treaties.

“When you consider the economic benefits and the high level of public support in British Columbia, it makes sense to complete treaties now,” said Chief Commissioner Sophie Pierre. “It’s time to realize a return on the significant investment that has been made to achieve treaties.”

Pierre said with a majority government in place and at least four years to make substantial progress on treaties, the Treaty Commission expects the Government of Canada to honour its commitment to First Nations and all British Columbians.

When telephone survey respondents were asked if they support or oppose making treaties with First Nations, 76% said they support treaties, including 40% who strongly support treaties. When asked what impact settling treaties will have on the provincial economy, 49% believed it would be a positive. That’s a 17% increase over survey findings in 2009 and 2010 and comes on the heels of a major campaign by the Treaty Commission to explain the economic benefits of treaties for all British Columbians.

The telephone survey of 500 British Columbians was conducted during the first week of April by Mustel Research Group. The margin of error is plus or minus 4.5% at a 95% confidence level.

The Mining Association of BC has joined the voices calling for a recommitment by the federal government to treaty making.

“The Treaty Commission was pleased to hear the mining association president say that treaties are the best way to provide a level of certainty on the land base and a vehicle for reconciliation with First Nations,” said Pierre. “We hope others will join with us in urging the federal government to recommit to completing treaties.”

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*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. For more information please visit [bctreaty.net](http://bctreaty.net).*

## **BACKGROUND**

BC Treaty Commission

# **Omnibus Survey Results April 2011**

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Results from the Mustel Research Group telephone survey of 500 British Columbians conducted during the first week of April 2011. The margin of error is plus or minus 4.5% at a 95% confidence level.

The results show a significant change in attitude when compared with the last survey and some of the best results since surveying began in 1999.

**Q. Do you support or oppose making treaties with BC's aboriginal groups, referred to as First Nations?**

### **Level of Support for Making Treaties with BC's First Nations:**

1999: 65%

2001: 62%

2006: 74%

2007: 66%

2007: 68%

2009: 71%

2010: 67%

**2011: 76%; 40% strongly (best result over 12 years of polling)**

**Q. Do you believe settling treaties with BC's First Nations will have a positive impact, negative impact or no real impact on the provincial economy?**

### **Perceived Impact of Settling Treaties on Provincial Economy**

2004: 41%

2006: 44%

2009: 32%

2010: 32%

**2011: 49% believe there will be a positive impact (best result)**

**Q.** Do you believe settling treaties with BC's First Nations will have a positive impact, negative impact or no real impact on your local economy?

**Perceived Impact of Settling Treaties on Local Economy**

2011: 41% believe there will be a positive impact (no comparative results)

**Q.** Have you heard of the BC Treaty Commission prior to this survey?

**Awareness of the BC Treaty Commission**

1999: 49%

2001: 50%

2006: 44%

2007: 55%

**2007: 56%**

2009: 51%

2010: 49%

**2011: 56%** (same as 2007 result)

**Q.** What do you know about the BC Treaty Commission?

**Knowledge of the Treaty Commission**

2011: 52% have some understanding; much higher in Vancouver and Victoria

**Q.** How knowledgeable or informed do you believe you are about First Nation issues and lives? Would you say you are very knowledgeable, somewhat knowledgeable, not very knowledgeable or not knowledgeable at all?

**Knowledge of First Nation issues and lives**

2011: 56% (very knowledgeable 9%; somewhat knowledgeable 47%)

**Q.** Where does your knowledge come from?

1. Media reports (51%)
2. Personal association with First Nations people (friends, neighbours)
3. Through my job/work with First Nations people
4. School/educational course/workshops