



BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

1004 Landooz Road
Prince George, BC V2K 5S3
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BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
March 7 – 8, 2024
Online via Zoom

Resolution 08/2024

SUBJECT: SUPPORT AND ENDORSEMENT FOR PHASE 1 OF THE FIRST NATIONS HOUSING & INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL'S HOUSING FRAMEWORK

MOVED BY: CHIEF DAN MANUEL, UPPER NICOLA BAND

SECONDED BY: CHIEF LYNDA PRICE, ULKATCHO FIRST NATION

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. Access to adequate and affordable housing is integral to all First Nations peoples' physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Through chronic underfunding, First Nations face unprecedented housing insecurity both on and off reserve and disproportionately represent the unhoused and housing-insecure population in BC and across Canada.
- B. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration), which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of BC, passed legislation committing to implementing, affirms:
 - Article 7(1):** Indigenous individuals have the rights to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security of person.
 - Article 21(1):** Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.

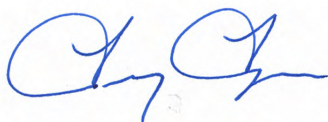
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Article 32(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.

- C. On March 13 & 14, 2017, the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) hosted the BC Housing and Infrastructure Forum: Moving Forward on First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Reform in BC. The purpose of the Forum was to determine a path forward for a First Nations-led authority for housing and infrastructure in the BC region.
- D. [BCAFN Resolution #18/2017](#), [First Nations Summit \(FNS\) Resolution #0618.04](#) and [Union of BC Indian Chiefs \(UBCIC\) Resolution 2018-11](#) entitled, "Support for the BC Assembly of First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Strategy," which mandates support for the recommendations outlined in the BCAFN Housing Forum Report entitled "[Creating a First Nations Housing & Infrastructure Authority: From Concept to Design](#)" which recommends the creation of a First Nations-led housing and infrastructure authority in BC. Through these mandates, the First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Council (FNHIC) was created to work with Rights and Title holders to design and develop a First Nations housing system that better meets the needs of First Nations in BC.
- E. A BC Chiefs Council on Housing and Infrastructure (BC-CCHI) was formed in 2017 to provide guidance and support from First Nations leadership on advancing First Nations Rights and Interests on issues related to housing and homelessness, including support, direction and governance oversight FNHIC housing and service delivery transfer. Terms of reference were drafted however due to inadequate funding, the BC-CCHI was unable to proceed with its mandate and has since been inactive as a BCAFN-led committee.
- F. BCAFN Resolution #07i/2019 mandates the creation of a BC First Nations Housing Officers Association to be developed by First Nations and community housing experts in coordination with the BC Chiefs Council on Housing and Infrastructure and FNHIC. In November 2023, the BC First Nations Housing Managers Association was launched by FNHIC to provide education, certification, accreditation and support for First Nations housing managers in BC.
- G. In 2019, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between FNHIC and Canada. It was witnessed by the members of the First Nations Leadership Council comprising the BCAFN, FNS, and UBCIC, and acknowledged FNHIC's mandate to:
 - a) assume authority and control of First Nations housing and infrastructure program delivery in British Columbia; and
 - b) deliver associated housing and infrastructure services.
- H. In 2023, BCAFN secured funding to advance its mandates related to housing and infrastructure, including multi-year funding to re-launch the BC Chiefs Council on Housing and Infrastructure. The BCAFN seeks to reconvene the committee to advance First Nations rights, advocacy and interests regarding housing and homelessness.

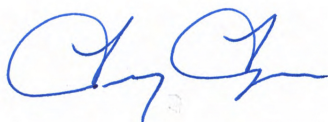
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- I. On October 23 & 24, 2023, BCAFN hosted a two-day Housing Forum to support engagement and dialogue with Chiefs, leadership, technicians and First Nations community members, on issues critical to housing and homelessness including First Nations-led Housing services and program delivery in BC. The forum was widely attended with 185 delegates participating in-person and 175 delegates joining online.
- J. BCAFN produced a What We Heard Report from the 2023 Housing Forum which outlines the key calls to action generated by participants as well as recommendations to advance First Nations' housing and homelessness priorities in BC. The report underscores the importance of recognizing housing as a fundamental human right enshrined in the UN Declaration and outlines recommendations to guide BCAFN's continued advocacy, including support for FNHIC's housing and infrastructure related program and service delivery in BC.
- K. Based on feedback from the housing forum and various engagement sessions with Rights and Title holders since 2017, FNHIC strives to operate through a community-driven model that fosters strong accountability and governance mechanisms.
- L. The FNHIC model incorporates a flexible service and program delivery approach that seeks to align with First Nations worldviews, respecting their inherent self-determination and jurisdiction on housing. First Nations can choose how they opt-in to FNHIC's proposed program and service delivery priorities, including adding or removing components that complement existing and future program and service delivery for their members both on and off reserve.
- M. FNHIC has developed a housing framework to guide a phased implementation of its mandate to assume responsibility and management for First Nations housing and infrastructure program and service delivery in BC.
- N. During phase one of its service delivery, FNHIC aims to provide asset management services to manage First Nations capital assets; a professional building maintenance worker training department; and a First Nations Housing Managers Association to provide First Nations capacity support on housing and infrastructure. The framework also includes strategic direction to guide FNHIC-specialized housing construction and support services for First Nations women and children out of care who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.
- O. FNHIC's proposed Framework seeks a phased approach to a full transfer of service and program delivery. Through each phase, FNHIC seeks to identify a needs-based approach for 'Transfer through Transformation' to cater its program and service delivery for all First Nations in BC. Its proposed phased approach includes:
 - Phase I: Design and implementation of accountable governance models and operational program and service delivery pilots and projects while incorporating transformative strategies to access currently available funding.

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Phase II: FNHIC will use the knowledge gained from Phase I for detailed operating and capital costing models including implementation of its advanced capital planning and Asset Management Plan, and a performance management system.

Phase III: FNHIC will seek endorsement from BC First Nations and adequate and sustainable funding for their housing program and delivery model before establishment of a long-term agreement with ISC for the transfer of responsibility for all housing and housing-related infrastructure programs and services in BC.

- P. As of January 2024, FNHIC has received supporting and/or data access Band Council Resolutions from 58 BC First Nations including:

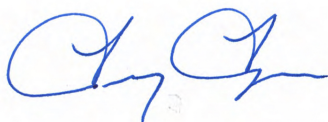
Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw Band, Fort Nelson First Nation, Iskut First Nation, Kitasoo First Nation, K'ómoks First Nation, Ts'kw'aylaxw First Nation, Gitga'at First Nation, Taku River Tlingit First Nation, Takla Lake First Nation, Kwiahah First Nation, ?Aq'am, Penelakut Tribe, Ts'uubaa-asatx (Lake Cowichan First Nation), Kwikwetlem First Nation, Xwísten (Bridge River Indian Band), Neskonlith Indian Band, Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation, Skowkale First Nation, Tsal'alh First Nation, Aitchelitz First Nation, Kwakiutl First Nation, Haisla Nation, T'Sou-ke First Nation, Witset First Nation, Semahquam First Nation, Tzeachten First Nation, Ulkatcho First Nation, Malahat First Nation, Cheam First Nation, Namgis First Nation, Tsawwassen First Nation, Coldwater Indian Band, Halfway River First Nation, Doig River First Nation, Gitxaala Nation, Tsartlip First Nation, Beecher Bay First Nation, Cook's Ferry First Nation, Songhees Nation, Saik'uz First Nation, Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em First Nation, and Kwiahah First Nation.

- Q. There is a need for a coordinated approach to addressing the housing and homelessness crisis with respect to First Nations' legal orders and traditions, advancing the recognition of the right to adequate housing for First Nations in BC, and advocating for the Crown to uphold the standards of Indigenous self-determination and self-government in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as it relates to housing and infrastructure.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly support the calls to action and recommendations contained within the 2023 Housing Forum What We Heard Report which include calling on all levels of government to:
 - a. acknowledge, affirm and uphold First Nations inherent rights, title and sovereignty with respect to housing, homelessness and related infrastructure;
 - b. recognize housing as a fundamental human right enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration);
 - c. ensure housing initiatives are sufficient, accessible, culturally appropriate, and resilient to the impacts of climate change;

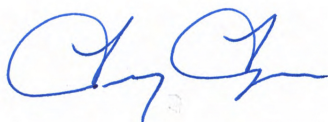
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- d. provide adequate and sustainable resources that provide housing solutions to meet the needs of all First Nations in BC, on and off reserve, so that no individual or community is left behind;
 - e. undertake a holistic and unified approach to addressing the housing and homelessness crisis grounded in free, prior, and informed consent;
 - f. support all First Nations in BC with their unique housing needs including fully supporting and financing FNHIC's Phase 1 for transfer of service and program delivery to the First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Council (FNHIC), where and when First Nations rights and title holders' consent to the transfer of such responsibility.
2. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly support the creation of a Chiefs Housing and Infrastructure Advisory Committee that will be incorporated into FNHIC's governance structure and ensure that the program and service delivery transfer process between Indigenous Services Canada and FNHIC are aligned with First Nations housing and infrastructure needs and priorities.
3. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly support and endorse the implementation of Phase 1 of FNHIC's proposed service delivery priorities which include:
 - a. continued development and enhancement of the BC First Nations Housing Managers Association (FNHMA);
 - b. creating an asset management program and asset management pilot projects;
 - c. regional service delivery housing hubs;
 - d. building maintenance worker training resources;
 - e. establishing supportive housing projects that seek to support women and children and eliminate contact with the Ministry of Child and Family Development and;
 - f. advocacy to reverse the overrepresentation of First Nations among Canada's dehousing population.
4. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly affirm that:
 - a. any programs or services must not interfere, impact or infringe on First Nations inherent, constitutionally protected and/or Treaty Rights, or Title;
 - b. any negotiated agreements between FNHIC and Canada must not interfere with Treaty agreements or take away from Canada's fiduciary responsibility to BC First Nations and;
 - c. First Nations may wish to opt-in or out of FNHIC's service and/or program delivery at any time.
5. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly support BCAFN & FNHIC to call on all levels of government to provide adequate, sustainable, long-term funding and resources for housing, homelessness, and infrastructure that meet the housing service and programming needs of First Nations in BC that address systemic issues related to housing for First Nations leading to chronically underfunded housing-related operations and maintenance such as renovations in addition to overcrowding, including but not limited to innovative, flexible and regionally appropriate funding approaches before a complete transfer process is fully instituted, and;

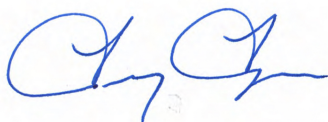
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6. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call upon FNHIC to report regularly to the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Terry Teegee", is written over a horizontal line.

Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief