

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: First Nations Communities
FROM: First Nations Forestry Council
DATE: August 29, 2017
RE: Forestry Key messages to Premier and Cabinet members

PURPOSE

To provide our community leaders a summary of recommended key messages to Premier John Horgan and Cabinet members in the upcoming meetings Sept 6-7, 2017, in Vancouver

BACKGROUND

Minister mandate letters have been provided to Ministers from the Premier setting out priority areas of work for Ministers. All letters share the mandates of the NDP Government which include adopting and implementing the UNDRIP and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Preparing for and implementing a mandate on UNDRIP requires significant investment in our communities for lands and resources offices. We need to significantly change the available financial and forest resources access for our communities to accomplish this goal and mandate.

RECOMMENDED KEY MESSAGES

Based on key areas of work in the Mandate letters that relate to forestry

1. **Premier John Horgan:** time to invest in First Nations Forestry. Policy change is required to enable the transition to meaningful participation and appropriate benefits to First Nation communities from lands and resources management in forestry. **Forest reconciliation legislation** would see these forest and financial resources made available through **land privatization** for First Nations and an **indigenous forest trust** established for capacity building programs and services, sustainable development of lands and resources offices and much needed collaboration and joint development of a revitalized forest sector based economy. Relative to your parties' mandates:
 - a. Creating affordability of life for all is a strong goal. The Natural Resources and the forest sector are strong drivers of this goal and should be a foundation for strengthening and creating economies for First Nations
 - b. Delivery of services is needed and this needs to include investment in organizations like the FN Forestry Council for service delivery – mandated by First Nations to serve First Nations with meaningful programs
 - c. Strong and healthy economy requires reconciliation with First Nations. The Forest Sector, the Governance of Forest Resources is a foundation to creating the stability needed for investment and a rejuvenated forest sector for all
2. **Minister Doug Donaldson,** Forests Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development:

- a. Softwood lumber negotiations is important issue for the leading manufactures of SL in BC. Current discussions do not support First Nations, the fact that there has not been reconciliation and meaningful revenue sharing and access to resources clearly demonstrates a subsidy to the forest sector. This needs to be addressed. In the absence of reconciliation, collected duties should be shared with First Nations, direct engagement and development of a solution is required to create stability for this issue moving forward
- b. We are excited to see a strong mandate towards workforce support in the manufacturing and reforestations segments of the sector. A clear commitment to strong benefits for First Nations in developing a renewed manufacturing sector is crucial, in fact we need this commitment for the entire workforce potential
- c. Modernizing land use planning towards sustainable managed forests is also critical. The last round of Land use planning was unsuccessful due to lack of FN involvement. Planning at this level requires investment in our communities to participate and share the decision making on the land base
- d. Strategies towards wildlife management are extremely important as this resource is a keystone indicator to sustainable management.

3. **Minister Scott Fraser**, Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation:

- a. The mandate to work collaboratively and respectfully with First Nations to develop vision of reconciliation to guide adopting the UNDRIP is an important mandate that requires an investment in First Nation, a significant investment in financial and natural resources will require a strong legislative approach, it is time for an *Indigenous Forest Reconciliation Act*.
- b. Partner with First Nations to transform treaty process under case law and UNDRIP. This mandate is extremely important and requires tremendous collaboration and investment. It is clearly a time to see lands and resources offices in First Nation communities resourced to full capacity

4. **Minister Melanie Mark**, Advanced Education, Skills and Training & Minister Rob Fleming, Education:

- a. The mandates of creating access to skills training and reducing financial burden from student loans could be also supported towards enabling training with First Nations. We need recognition of the scale of the opportunity to train and invite First Nation's into the work force in BC.. Indigenous workforce programs like the First Nations Forestry Workforce Initiative and ASET programs need to be supported in a revitalized way.
- b. Initiatives such as the co-op and apprentice and work experience programs suggested are also in alignment with the FN Forestry Council Workforce Initiative
- c. The goal of increased forest sector skilled workers supporting degree and certificate training programs is directly in line with our Workforce initiative.. One of our projects with BCTS has been a direct technician training program (scholarship for training) that leads to summer employment with BCTS.. This is ready for expansion to other corporate entities
- d. Considering the above mandates strong support should be provided to the FN Forestry Council for its ongoing development and implementation of it First Nations Forestry Workforce Initiative