



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

May 2, 2018

### **BCAFN Supports Federal Legislation to Affirm, Recognize and Implement First Nations Rights**

**(Algonquin Territory, Ottawa, BC – May 2, 2018)** – The BCAFN Regional Chief, and BCAFN Board of Directors met in Ottawa along-side Chiefs and leaders from BC and across Canada to discuss changes to federal legislation, including the proposed federal Recognition and Implementation of Indigenous Rights Framework. Chiefs, Elders, youth and Hereditary leaders had discussions on how the Government of Canada can change their approach to affirm First Nations rights and title, including inherent rights, and treaty rights. Prime Minister Trudeau also spoke to the Chiefs at the AFN Assembly, acknowledging Canada's commitment to improve the relationship with First Nations, including the affirmation of their rights.

Regional Chief Terry Teegee stated, "The rights and title of First Nations in BC belong to First Nations peoples and their governments. The AFN, the BCAFN and the BC First Nations Leadership Council are political advocacy organizations created and mandated by First Nations to support First Nations communities. We provide a space to collectively work together on common issues and speak with a unified voice." Regional Chief Teegee added, "BCAFN is supportive of a First Nations-led process for new federal laws and regulations that must affirm and recognize First Nations inherent rights, Treaty rights, including Aboriginal title. Chiefs have been saying that they must be part of co-drafting any federal legislation – we have an opportunity for a true nation-to-nation processes to improve the livelihoods of First Nations and Canadians."

Today, the AFN Chiefs -in-Assembly endorsed and ratified Resolution #1/2018, "*Implementing Canada's Recognition and Implementation of Indigenous Rights Framework and clarifying the role of the AFN.*" This resolution provides clarity that Canada must work with First Nations governments and ensure that all phases of the legislative process are guided by the standards set out in the *United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples*.

On April 12, 2018 over 100 Chiefs in BC met to discuss the development of a strategy and unified position regarding their interests in seeing changes to both provincial and federal laws to recognize, implement and affirm First Nations inherent Title, Rights and Treaty rights. Regional Chief Teegee said, "Many Chiefs in BC demand to have their rights, including title, recognized, implemented and affirmed. If Canada and BC do not change their laws, First Nations cannot be the partners that Prime Minister Trudeau is seeking. We have an unprecedented opportunity in front of us to make lasting and transformative change in the relationship between First Nations and the Government of Canada."

#### **For further information, contact:**

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