



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

www.bcafn.ca

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

January 14, 2021

REGIONAL CHIEF TERRY TEEGEE CALLS ON CITY OF SURREY TO REVERSE COUNCIL DECISION TO REJECT TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AS PROTOCOL

(Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George, BC – January 14, 2021) – The City of Surrey resides on the unceded, unsurrendered and continually occupied territories of the Semiahmoo, Katzie, Kwikwetlem, Kwantlen, Musqueam, Qayqayt, Tsleil Waututh and Tsawwassen First Nations. In an effort to educate themselves and embark on journeys of reconciliation, many municipalities across the country have instituted a territorial acknowledgement, including the City of Vancouver and others in BC, as a mandatory protocol when opening up meetings.

On January 11th 2021, a motion was put forward by a Surrey city councilor, “That the City of Surrey develop a meaningful, respectful acknowledgment before every council and committee meeting of our commitment as a city to reconciliation and recognition that the land we are on is the traditional territory of the Coast Salish people.” Subsequently, it was voted down by Mayor Doug McCallum and 4 city councilors and 4 voted in support resulting in a 5-4 split. The decision to not make territorial acknowledgements a protocol for city meetings is disappointing and a further enforcement of systemic racism.

Regional Chief Terry Teegee stated, “If the city cannot acknowledge whose lands they work, how can Surrey be trusted to advance reconciliation and First Nations issues? This is especially concerning considering the large Indigenous population in the City of Surrey, many of whom are young and starting families. This rejection of a simple and respectful step towards making the city a safe and welcoming place for these families is cause for concern.”

Continuing, Teegee said, “I am calling on the City of Surrey to revisit this City motion and consider the ramifications for rejecting to acknowledge the territories on which the city operates. The disrespect that this rejection emulates will not contribute to better outcomes between the non-Indigenous and Indigenous populations in Surrey. Passing the motion is the right thing to do.”

-30-

For further information, contact:

Annette Schroeter, Communications Officer. (778) 281-1655. BC Assembly of First Nations.

#honouringourancestors

