



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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### BCAFN Celebrates Earth Day 2024 and Calls for Action to Address Climate and Biodiversity Emergencies

**(Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George, BC)** – Today, the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) acknowledges Earth Day and calls for urgent and collective action to address climate and biodiversity emergencies. This ongoing crisis is a symptom of a broader problem rooted in people's disconnection of values and actions from nature, resulting in ecological imbalance, environmental destruction, and ongoing social injustice.

“It is with deepening concern that we witness the escalating impact of climate change on our lands and waters. The increasing frequency and severity of drought, the record-low snowpack this year, and the heightened risk of wildfires underscore the urgent need for immediate action to protect our environment, communities, and ways of life,” stated BCAFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee.

The [wisdom of Knowledge Keepers](#), such as Dr. Robert Joseph and Shane Point, reminds us of the profound physical, cultural and spiritual unity we share with the land and ecosystems that sustain us. Our relationship with Mother Earth and the resources she provides, like the salmon that nourish us, is symbiotic and must be nurtured with reverence and vigilance.

“To preserve and protect the well-being of our communities, life and the land, we must heed the call of our Knowledge Keepers and ancestors, honouring and respecting the interconnectedness that binds us all. Only by cultivating this deep sense of connection, reciprocity and responsibility can we work towards healing solutions to tackle the crisis created by climate change,” remarked Regional Chief Teegee.

Solutions rooted in First Nations’ ceremonies, traditions, languages, cultures, and natural laws must drive climate policy. In addition, effective climate education, emergency and disaster response and management of climate change impacts require adequate funding and resources to address community vulnerabilities, develop mitigation strategies, and organize recovery efforts. By aligning funding mechanisms with the right of self-determination and the principles of free, prior, and informed consent, governments can empower First Nations to participate fully in decision-making processes, positively affect outcomes, reduce climate pollution, and advance the resilience and well-being of all communities.

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**More information:**

Snowpack and Drought: Source: BC Government - <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/drought>  
2023 was the hottest year on record:

Source: <https://climate.copernicus.eu/copernicus-2023-hottest-year-record#:~:text=Global%20surface%20air%20temperature%20highlights,highest%20annual%20value%20in%202016>

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