

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Shuswap Nation Tribal Council

OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSED RECOGNITION & RECONCILIATION LEGISLATION

The chiefs of the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council (SNTC) recognize their duty to the Secwepemc people to ensure the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights and as such strongly oppose the province's proposed *Recognition and Reconciliation Act*.

Without addressing past infringements perpetrated by the province of British Columbia claiming exclusive jurisdiction and title over Aboriginal lands and resources with a complete disregard for free prior informed consent the draft legislation contradicts itself.

Furthermore, the province does not have the jurisdiction or authority to deliver through this draft legislation true recognition or protection of indigenous jurisdiction over indigenous territories leaving us, the indigenous peoples of British Columbia vulnerable.

"The only thing we can be certain of with the Recognition and Reconciliation Act," says Chief Wayne Christian, spokesman for the SNTC, "is that our people will continue to suffer in poverty, and that our lands and water will continue to be taken from under us."

"The proposed Recognition and Reconciliation Act will only create the impression that the rights and title of the indigenous people of British Columbia are being recognized, but we will inevitably be pushed into non-existence by its principles," he adds.

The Secwepemc people have never ceded, sold or surrendered control over their territories, people, or resources.

The proposed legislation is a direct breach of the Canadian Constitution however well-meaning it may be. Not only does the province not have jurisdiction over such matters, but it is attempting to violate the division of powers in British Columbia jeopardizing the good faith of all British Columbia's inhabitants.

With the upcoming centennial of the signing of the "Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier" on August 25th, 2010 the chiefs of the SNTC determine to pursue engagement with the federal Crown on a nation-to-nation basis in order to resolve Aboriginal title and rights issues, and will continue to assert their right to self-determination as supported by international law and as defined by our forefathers.

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