

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

News Release

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FNLC Expresses Profound Disappointment with the Passage of Bills 14 and 15

(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) Last night, the Provincial legislature passed Bills 14, *Renewable Energy Projects (Streamlined Permitting) Act* and 15, *Infrastructure Projects Act* each with a vote count of 47-46 and the Speaker casting the tie-breaking votes. The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) is deeply disappointed with this outcome. Despite overwhelming opposition from First Nations across the province, despite our clearly expressed legal concerns, despite the clear violation of the Province's own *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and despite numerous appeals for withdrawal, the Provincial government chose to ram through legislation that fundamentally undermines our rights, titles and threatens the health and well-being of our territories.

BCAFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee stated, "The passage of Bills 14 and 15 represents a new low point in the relationship between the Provincial Crown and First Nations. Premier Eby and his government have chosen to ignore our voices, dismiss our rights, and trample on the very reconciliation framework they helped create. The damage to our relationship will be profound and lasting. But First Nations do not have the luxury of walking away from this fight. Our ancestors demand that we continue to stand up for our rights and title, as our future generations depend on it. We will use every legal and available tool at our disposal to protect what is rightfully ours and to hold this government accountable for breaking their own laws."

Robert Phillips, First Nations Summit Political Executive, stated "Regrettably, the Province forced closure on Bills last night that are in direct contravention of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, and which are resoundingly opposed by First Nations and others. The First Nations Leadership Council did its best to message to the Province the problems with the Bills and offered to work with them in the coming months, should they pause the Bills to create opportunity for the government to carry out its obligations to First Nations. It was our hope to work together on solutions. Unfortunately, our offer was not taken up. Now we will take the time necessary with Nations to conduct a post-mortem, assess the status of our relationship with BC and consider all options. In any event, we will continue to implement our mandate to support First Nations in the exercise and protection of their inherent, constitutional and human rights."

UBCIC President Grand Chief Stewart Phillip concluded "There is overwhelming opposition from First Nations all over the Province to Bills 14 and 15. With the Province's forced closure of the Bills last night, reconciliation in B.C. is having a near death experience. For the past few weeks, our relationship with the Province on the Bills has been challenged by unilateral decision making and the Province's condescending attitude that they know what's best for all First Nations in B.C. Our opposition is based on law and on principle. As always, we will continue to work to ensure the inherent and constitutionally protected title and rights of First Nations in B.C. are upheld, and in the case of these Bills, we will be considering all our options. We fully expect the Province to uphold its own laws if reconciliation is to be resuscitated."



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The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN), First Nations Summit (FNS), and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC). <https://www.fnlc.ca/>

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