

# FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

## News Release

February 19, 2026

### First Nations Reject Proposed Amendments to the Declaration Act; FNLC Launch Dedicated Webpage to Fight Misinformation & Division

(xʷməθkʷəy'əm (Musqueam), Skwx̱ wú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) / Vancouver, B.C.) Today, the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) launched a new page on its website - [fnlc.ca/declaration-act](https://fnlc.ca/declaration-act) - to counteract the ongoing, highly damaging misinformation that has permeated the public and political discourse around B.C.'s *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, also known as the Declaration Act or DRIPA. First Nations have continued to loudly reject proposed amendments to the Declaration Act, including through [resolution](#) at the UBCIC Chiefs Council last week.

Passed unanimously in the B.C. Legislature on November 26, 2019, the Declaration Act came into force on November 29, 2019 and made B.C. the first jurisdiction in Canada to formally adopt the internationally recognized human rights standards for Indigenous peoples of the UN Declaration. The Declaration Act was developed collaboratively with First Nations and passed unanimously by all political parties in the Legislature, with the support of industry, business, and labour. It creates a path forward for B.C. by establishing minimum standards of survival and dignity for Indigenous peoples, while also introducing better transparency, predictability and accountability in Indigenous-provincial relationships. The Declaration Act has contributed to greater trust, stability, and economic certainty across the province. It is landmark legislation—one all British Columbians should be proud of.

"Multiple sources have suggested that the Declaration Act must be amended to protect private property interests in B.C. This is misinformation and categorically incorrect," remarked ʔaʔsiwʔ Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President.

However, in response to recent court decisions and political opposition, the Province has announced its plans to amend the Declaration Act. In December 2025, in response to the B.C. Supreme Court's ruling in the Gitxaala Nation and Ehattesaht First Nation Appeal Decision, [Premier David Eby said](#) his government would "proceed with amendments to provide clarity around what was clearly intended when we introduced this legislation," and that elected representatives should "remain in control of this process, not the courts." Premier Eby has now indicated that his government intends to amend the Declaration Act in the spring 2026 session.

"We can't have the key Indigenous-specific piece of human rights legislation subject to cabinet will, when other human rights legislation is justiciable," said Stewart Phillip. The courts have upheld the need for deep consultation with First Nations, and the ambitious timeline proposed for major projects in B.C. will be impossible without that deep consultation."

"The FNLC fully supports the Declaration Act as co-developed and passed in 2019, and calls on the Province to honour the Declaration Act and our mutual, vital work of reconciliation" stated Terry Teegee, BCAFN Regional Chief. "It's important to acknowledge that British Columbia is facing real economic challenges, and First Nations are essential and equal partners in addressing those challenges. We stand united in our opposition to any amendments to gut the Declaration Act, which seeks to affirm and protect our rights."



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The Province is considering amendments to the Declaration Act at the very time that we are seeing some of the projects initiated under the Act come to fruition.

On January 26, 2026, the [Tahltan Central Government and B.C. made history with consent-based decisions](#) under the Declaration Act on the Eskay Creek Mine Project. “The collaboration that existed through that process demonstrated that we can work together,” said Nalaine Morin [at a recent public meeting](#). Morin is a member of the Tahltan Nation and a senior vice-president of environment and social affairs for Eskay Creek owner Skeena Gold + Silver. “I am absolutely 100 per cent opposed to repealing DRIPA. We need to move forward. We are an example that this can happen. This can be successful.”

On October 3, 2025, [the Province and 'Namgis First Nation reached a key milestone in their relationship](#) - a first-of-its-kind draft joint decision-making agreement under the Declaration Act. The agreement helps ensure transparency, stability and predictability for the forestry sector through consensus on where and how future harvest activities will occur. “This agreement is a step toward reconciliation by recognizing 'Namgis jurisdiction in our territory and ensuring forestry management reflects our stewardship values, while contributing to economic stability in the region,” said Chief Victor Isaac, 'Namgis First Nation.

The new Declaration Act [page on the FNLC website](#) includes clarifying information and facts on the history of the Declaration Act, a timeline of key events, Declaration Act success stories, and frequently asked questions, including how this legislation has been falsely linked to recent court cases. It is critical that all British Columbians understand the facts and appreciate the cooperation the Act has enabled, instead of being drawn into fear and further division.

“We are presenting the facts on the Declaration Act in order to cut through the disappointing and divisive misinformation being peddled by opportunistic politicians,” declared *Laxele'wuts'aat Huy'wu'qw* (Chief) Shana Thomas, First Nations Summit Political Executive. “We hope that this new web page will be an important resource, and we call on all British Columbians to support this key piece of legislation for reconciliation in this Province.”

To learn more about the Declaration Act, visit the [new dedicated page on the FNLC website](#), the [Province's own Declaration Act web](#) page, and [the Province's Making Decisions Together page](#).

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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).*

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