

# OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

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Assembly of First Nations  
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Via Email: c/o [nc@afn.ca](mailto:nc@afn.ca)

## **OPEN LETTER: Capacity and Accessibility at the 2019 AFN AGA**

Dear National Chief Bellegarde and Executive Committee,

The upcoming AFN's Annual General Assembly (AGA) in the Fredericton, New Brunswick on July 23-25 presents an invaluable opportunity for discussion, dialogue, and strategic planning that the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) is looking forward to participating in.

However, a key concern over the accessibility and capacity of the AGA has been raised that we hope you can shed some light on. The provisional agenda on the AFN website indicates that only Chiefs will be allowed in the main plenary due to capacity issues. However, the official Fredericton Convention Centre capacity chart states the capacity of the ballroom stands at 1,222, which would be adequate to fit all the attending Chiefs and delegates which the Fredericton Convention Center lists at 1,200. Although AFN has stated that the AGA will maximize capacity and is open to as many delegates as possible in the main meeting room, including Chiefs, Elders, Grand Chiefs, Veterans, Youth and Elder Councils, it is unclear whether technicians will be allowed to enter.

If the main ballroom is set up so that detachable airwalls are used to divide or separate attendees, UBCIC respectfully asks that these or other barriers to equal and open access be removed. We have not been aware of any AGA meeting in the past where observers and Elders were kept separate in different rooms. Consequently, we would like to see the AGA proceed in a manner that is befitting of a typical AFN meeting – open to all those who register and conducive to transparent and meaningful communication. As the AFN is a national body uniting our nations across the country, the division or separation of attendees to the AGA may contribute to

frustrations as all attendees should be able to hear the Chief's dialogue on many important issues affecting our Peoples and Nations without feeling excluded.

UBCIC is grateful for the opportunity to join other First Nation governments and citizens across Canada to strategize and to focus on this year's theme of "Celebrating Successes and Giving Thanks." We hope you can provide some clarification to our concerns and help create an atmosphere of gratitude, unity, and integrity at the AGA that is so needed in our collective mission to advance the rights and interests of First Nations.

**On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS**



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip  
President



Chief Don Tom  
Vice-President



Kukpi7 Judy Wilson  
Secretary-Treasurer