

April 21, 2020

**Premier John Horgan
BC Minister of Health Adrian Dix
BC Centre for Disease Control**

We, the undersigned, are writing to request that you immediately shut down construction activities at all B.C.'s large industrial work camps and megaprojects.

Three factors make this step urgent.

First, these projects concentrate large numbers of workers together. Despite modest staff reductions, reports indicate that the Site C dam project has 979 workers currently on site, with more coming.

Second, the cramped working and living conditions, the sharing of tools and the nature of the work itself render consistent physical distancing virtually impossible.

Finally, the transient nature of these workforces regularly travelling back and forth to their home communities elsewhere in BC and Canada raises an unavoidable risk of work sites becoming incubators for the spread of COVID-19 onsite, during travel and in those home communities.

In many instances, industrial work camps are located in close proximity to First Nations communities. Asymptomatic infected workers coming in and out of camps risk the transmission of the COVID-19 virus to these and other small, vulnerable communities. There has already been a confirmed coronavirus case at the Kitimat LNG Canada project, and a number of workers at the Site C dam worksite remain on isolation.

It is incomprehensible to us that the provincial government has chosen to define industrial work camps as essential services and keep these camps open. In essence, the provincial government is prioritizing private profit over human health. In the face of growing evidence of asymptomatic transfer of COVID-19*, this position is untenable. Industrial work camps present a looming and unacceptable threat to health of the workers employed in them, their families and nearby northern communities. They add to the already existing threats to the survival of Indigenous people throughout the province.

We request that the government of B.C. shuts down any and all construction work at all large industrial work until such time as the Chief Provincial Health Officer indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic is no longer a significant public health threat.

(Organizations listed for identification purposes)

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip
President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs
Kelowna

Chief Don Tom
Vice-President, UBCIC
Vancouver

Kukpi7 Judy Wilson
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