

# OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

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## News Release

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### Days after Indigenous Peoples are Forcibly Removed from their Territories, Throne Speech Highlights Reconciliation

((X<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əy<sup>ə</sup>m (Musqueam), Sk<sup>w</sup>xwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətaʔ/səliłwitulh (Tseil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C. – February 11, 2020) In the dark shadow of the RCMP's unlawful invasion onto unceded Wet'suwet'en territory and violent enforcement of Coastal GasLink's injunction, yesterday the NDP government unveiled their throne speech at the BC Legislature to the exuberant sounds of a Wet'suwet'en solidarity rally protesting outside.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs stated, "The speech from the throne comes at a time of dire crisis and turmoil. While we welcomed and celebrated Bill 41, we are now extremely concerned that the Horgan Government is picking and choosing which Articles of the UN Declaration that it upholds and when. Yesterday's speech cannot erase or conceal the Province's deplorable treatment of the Wet'suwet'en chiefs and land defenders who have had their right to free, prior and informed consent violated. Legislation is a step forward, but actions are louder than words. It simply isn't enough to say that 'reconciliation with Indigenous peoples is a matter of rights, respect and justice' while ignoring the rule of law and the Supreme Court of Canada's *Delgamuukw-Gisday'wa* and *Tsilhqot'in* judgements. The rhetoric that is being peddled by the Horgan government which implies that there is confusion in the interpretation of *Delgamuukw-Gisday'wa* about the authority of the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary leadership is a purposeful and strategic effort to confuse and misinform the public."

"The Speech from the Throne made me worried about the future of our lands and waters," said Chief Don Tom, Vice-President of UBCIC. "The authors of the speech note that 'as work gets underway on the LNG Canada project...this government is seeking ways to reduce [greenhouse gas] emissions overall.' The problem is that although the expansion of the LNG industry is included in the Province's carbon budget, the carbon budget does not go far enough in reducing emissions to be consistent with the targets recommended by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to limit global warming to 1.5° C. This frustration with the Province's lack of bold leadership on the

environment was heard in the demonstrations outside the legislature yesterday- ultimately the land defenders in Wet'suwet'en are trying to keep their territories clean for the benefit of all British Columbians.”

Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, Secretary-Treasurer of the UBCIC concluded, “We were proud to stand in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en on the footsteps of legislature yesterday with youth, Elders and supporters to hold this government accountable. I would like to say to Premier Horgan that Indigenous peoples and our supporters will continue to stand up across Turtle Island to protect our rights. The throne speech and the provincial government's agenda should not have prioritized a pipeline over the integrity, dignity and well-being of Indigenous peoples. BC cannot shirk its commitment to the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* in its pursuit of money and economic power. As an organization and as Indigenous leadership, we are always moving ahead and we sincerely hope that the Horgan government is able to listen to the rising chorus of voices demanding change.”

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*UBCIC is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.*

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