

INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

ENGAGEMENT INVITATION TO ELECTED CHIEFS

DRAFT – March 24, 2021

Purpose

- Invitation letter to elected chiefs to engage with Minister of State Cullen
- Letters to be sent by the Secretariat on behalf of Minister of State Cullen
- Responses and questions to LNROSecretariat@gov.bc.ca

Elected Chief Sessions

Dear [insert name of Chief]

I hope this letter finds you and your community well and safe. I am seeking an opportunity to engage with you or a representative from your council regarding an important proposal I have been asked to accomplish on behalf of the Province.

In November 2020, I was honoured to be named by Premier John Horgan as the Minister of State for Lands and Natural Resource Operations. In this role, one of my top priorities is to look at restructuring options within the natural resource sector, including the development of a plan for a new Ministry for Lands and Natural Resource Operations. To support this work, a Lands and Natural Resource Operations Secretariat (Secretariat) has been established, led by Deputy Minister Lori Halls. The attached background document provides more information about this work and the process the Secretariat is following to develop restructuring options for the natural resource sector.

I am interested in meeting with Indigenous representatives from around the province to better understand what is working well and where improvements can be made in relation to the natural resource sector. Your perspectives and experiences will be invaluable in better organizing and focusing our government in support reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, environmental sustainability, and economic activity.

I am hosting a series of three hour virtual dialogue sessions with First Nations leadership this spring. These sessions will be facilitated by Dan George of Four Directions Management Services. I invite you, or an elected representative from your Band Council, to attend one of the sessions being held on the following dates and times:

1. Monday, April 26th: 3 pm – 6 pm
2. Friday, April 30th: 9:30 am – 12:30 pm
3. Friday, April 30th: 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm
4. Monday, May 3rd: 9:30 am – 12:30 pm
5. Monday, May 3rd: 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm
6. Wednesday, May 5th: 9:30 am – 12:30 pm
7. Wednesday, May 5th: 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm
8. Friday, May 7th: 9:30 am – 12:30 pm

To foster an environment for rich dialogue to occur, these sessions will be limited to 15 individuals per session. If you are interested in participating, please reply to this message by April 2nd, 2021 indicating your top choice, and preferred alternative, to attend a session. Once your attendance has been confirmed, you will be contacted by Secretariat staff with details of the session including background material. In addition, if you have any questions, please respond to this message and Secretariat staff will be happy to respond.

Given the aggressive timeframe that I and the Secretariat have to develop restructuring options for the natural resource sector, we are doing our best to provide opportunities to engage virtually. However, I recognize that not everyone will be able to attend an engagement session. If you are unable to attend a session but still want to provide input on what's working well in the natural resource sector and where improvements can be made, please fill out this [survey](#) by April 30th, 2021.

As part of this process, I am also meeting with hereditary leadership, provincial Indigenous associations and natural resource councils (First Nations Forestry Council, First Nations Fisheries Council, First Nations Energy and Mining Council), and with government partnered Indigenous forums such as the Collaborative Stewardship Forum, Environmental Sustainability Initiative, Marine Area Planning Process, and Great Bear Rainforest.

Implementation of any restructuring decision by government may result in legislative changes. The work to make any legislative changes would not likely begin until spring 2022 and the appropriate engagement will be undertaken as part of the Province's commitments under the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

Given the importance of this initiative, your feedback is extremely valuable, and I hope that you will be able to join me in a discussion about the future of land stewardship in British Columbia.

Sincerely,

Honourable Nathan Cullen
Minister of State for Lands and Natural Resource Operations