

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

News Release

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FNLC Celebrates Passing of Bill C-15 in Canada's Senate

(X̱w̱məθḵwəy̱əm (Musqueam), Sḵw̱x̱wú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) is pleased with the passing of Bill C-15 – *An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in the Senate of Canada. Bill C-15 is a much-anticipated legislation that will now become enshrined in Canadian law and will begin a transformation in the relationship between the government of Canada and Indigenous peoples.

"I'm hopeful and optimistic that the passing of this legislation in the Senate, the final hurdle in making this Bill law, will revitalize and transform the pathway to reconciliation," stated Regional Chief Terry Teegee. "This new law will provide space for First Nations to meaningfully engage across the economic, social and cultural sectors in Canada and start to address inequalities that are deeply embedded in Canadian systems."

"The passage of Bill C-15 is a welcome and much needed opportunity to finally make a decisive break with Canada's history of colonialism and ignoring and denying the human rights of Indigenous peoples. First Nations have long been working to right this path and have called for urgent reforms to address the lack of oversight and accountability in the child welfare system, in policing, in health care, and in justice. Implementation of Bill C-15 will be a valuable tool to achieving this," said Cheryl Casimer of the FNS Political Executive. "It must be noted that the Act does not create new rights, it provides a path forward to implementing an important human rights instrument. It will require concrete, meaningful, and timely actions to ensure that Canada finally lives up to its obligations under Treaties, the Constitution and international law,"

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President, stated, "Today is a good day. The passage of Bill C-15 as a federal legislative framework for the implementation of the *UN Declaration* is a critical step forward. No longer can Canada hide behind the archaic and racist "doctrine of discovery" and "terra nullius". Turtle Island belongs to the Indigenous peoples who were here prior to colonization. We must provide our free, prior and informed consent on any projects that happen in our territories."

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action (43 & 44) directed the federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as the framework for reconciliation. The next step is the development of



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a national action plan to achieve the goals set in *The Declaration*. The FNLC looks forward to working together with the federal government as we move forward on this pathway.

Important Links:

[Bill C-15](#) – *An Act respecting the United Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*: [Calls to Action](#)

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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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