

# FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

## News Release

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### **FNLIC Demands Immediate Climate Action Including End to Fossil Fuel Subsidies following UN “Code Red” Report**



BRITISH COLUMBIA  
ASSEMBLY OF  
FIRST NATIONS

1004 Landooz Rd.  
Prince George, BC  
V2K 5S3

Ph: 778-945-9910  
Fx: 778-945-9916



FIRST  
NATIONS  
SUMMIT

1200-100 Park Royal South  
West Vancouver, BC  
V7T 1A2

Ph: 604-926-9903  
Fx: 604-926-9923  
Toll Free: 866-990-9939



UNION OF  
BRITISH COLUMBIA  
INDIAN CHIEFS

401 – 312 Main Street  
Vancouver, BC  
V6A 2T2

Ph: 604-684-0231  
Fx: 604-684-5726

(X̱w̱məθḵw̱əy̱əm (Musqueam), Sḵw̱x̱w̱ú7mesh (Squamish) and səliiwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLIC) calls upon the governments of Canada and British Columbia to take the escalating and deadly climate emergency seriously and act immediately and swiftly in response to the threat posed by human created climate change. The danger of the current path we are on is highlighted by the recent United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report [Climate Change 2021: the Physical Science Basis](#) (the **IPCC Report**) released last week.

The IPCC Report shows that observed increases in greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations trapped in the atmosphere are unequivocally caused by human activities. Observed global warming shows that human-caused surface global temperature has increased by 1.09°C and will continue to increase until at least the mid-century even under the best proactive scenario. In the next 20 years of global warming, the average temperature at the earth's surface is expected to increase by more than 1.5°C to 2°C unless deep reductions in GHG emissions occur in the coming decades. The *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* affirms that Indigenous peoples must provide their free, prior and informed consent on any development taking place in their respective territories. The proper title holders to the land exercise self-determination and must be full partners in any plans to address the climate emergency.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President, stated “We are witnessing first-hand global climate catastrophe, as confirmed by the IPCC report. We are living firsthand the devastating impacts of human caused and influenced global heating, with the global surface temperature having risen at faster rates over the past 50 years than they have in any other 50-year period in at least the last 2000 years. Despite this real and immediate threat to our continued existence and the world as we know it, federal politicians and climate change deniers are attempting to push the absurd idea that we need fossil fuel industries to fund mitigation measures. As this report shows us, continued reliance on these industries will be a death sentence for the planet and our future generations. Enough showboating and weak interventions from Canada’s politicians. What we need are urgent and immediate investments and policies that support the development of clean, renewable energy initiatives, in ways that support Indigenous Title and Rights and traditional knowledge systems and our continued, collective, existence. Our homes and communities are burning to the ground. Our traditional lands and wildlife habitat are being incinerated. There is no time to waste.”

Temperature is not the only trend being altered according to the report. Global mean sea levels have risen faster since 1900 than over any preceding century in at least the last 3000 years. From 2011–2020, the annual average area of Arctic Sea ice reached its lowest level since at least 1850. The retreat of glaciers has been consistent across the world since the 1950s and is unprecedented in at least the last 2000 years. Human influence has also contributed to multiple changes in the water cycle (heavy rainfall and more droughts) and in the oceans (warming, acidifying and losing oxygen), which affects sea life and the people that depend on it.

“We all know that the oil, gas and coal industries are the major drivers of GHG emissions in the world, Canada and BC. We must stop the burning and extraction of fossil fuels on a much faster timeline than currently proposed. A first step that Canada and BC must take is to halt all fossil fuel subsidies and commit to halting extraction and consumption of fossil fuels on a much more aggressive timeline than currently proposed by either the Federal or Provincial climate change policies,” stated Lydia Hwitsum, Political Executive member of the First Nations Summit. “Governments can’t continue to shy away from the devastating realities of climate change. These issues should and must be at the forefront of the political parties’ platforms leading up to the September 2021 federal election.”

According to the IPCC Report, since the 1950s, human influence has likely increased the chance of compound extreme events such as increases in the frequency of concurrent heatwaves and droughts at the global scale, increases in weather hot dry and windy weather that causes wildfires in some regions, and heavy rainfall and compound flooding in others.

BCAFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee stated, “The unprecedented deadly heat waves that recently took hold over the province and the massively out of control wildfires currently wreaking havoc in BC make it clear that global warming threatens our lives, communities and wildlife. It also threatens our cultural and physical connections to our Territories, our access to life sustaining resources, and even our continued existence on this planet. Aggressive and swift actions are required immediately to mitigate and reverse the devastating suffering and destruction that is coming. I expect to see robust and comprehensive climate action platforms from Canada’s political parties for the upcoming federal election.”

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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).*

**For further information, contact:**

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President

Lydia Hwitsum, FNS Political Executive

Annette Schroeter, Communications officer, BCAFN

Phone: 250-490-5314

Phone: 604-868-0032

Phone: 780-981-1655