



Ref. 52888

July 8, 2021

Regional Chief Terry Teegee
British Columbia Assembly of First Nations
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Prince George BC V2K 5S3

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip
Chief Don Tom
Kukpi7 Judy Wilson
Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs
209 – 345 Chief Alex Thomas Way
Kamloops BC V2H 1H1

Cheryl Casimer
Robert Phillips
Lydia Hwitsum
First Nations Summit
Suite 1200 – 100 Park Royal South
West Vancouver BC V7T 1A2

Dear First Nations Leadership Council:

I am writing to you today to provide you an update on my current thinking related to the Secretariat as promised at the Joint Core Political Table on May 27, 2021. I want to thank you again for sharing your technical scoping paper on the Secretariat.

In addition to meetings with the First Nations Leadership Council, I have consulted with experts on public administration to explore how to structure the Secretariat so it is able to most effectively carry out its functions.

I see the secretariat as necessary to meeting government obligations and opportunities under the Declaration Act and providing oversight and guidance on legislative alignment with the UN Declaration. The Secretariat must be able to ensure integrated, cross-government alignment and accountability and have credibility with Indigenous peoples in British Columbia (B.C.).

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The initial priority for the Secretariat will be alignment of laws. The Secretariat will be an important body, internal to government, to guide the work across ministries to align laws with the UN Declaration, and be led by a senior official (e.g. Associate Deputy Minister). We are considering what specific matters it will oversee in its role, how it should be structured to ensure integrated, cross-government alignment and accountability, and how to ensure its composition is credible with Indigenous peoples in B.C.

I am working to have the Secretariat structure determined as soon as possible. I intend to continue discussions with my colleagues, and look forward to further discussions with the First Nations Leadership Council and others, as I prepare to present the Secretariat plan to Cabinet in the fall.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Murray Rankin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Murray" and the last name "Rankin" clearly legible.

Murray Rankin, QC
Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation