



News Release

For Immediate Release

Tsilhqot'in and Canada Take First Steps towards Reconciliation with Signing of Letter of Understanding

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
Tsilhqot'in Nation

January 27, 2017 Tl'esqox First Nation (Riske Creek, BC)

The Government of Canada is committed to working in partnership with Indigenous people to renew the relationship based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership is key to achieving reconciliation.

Today, the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs and Tsilhqot'in leadership signed a Letter of Understanding committing to renew and strengthen the nation-to-nation relationship and advance lasting reconciliation with the Tsilhqot'in people.

Canada and the Tsilhqot'in Nation will now work towards developing a reconciliation framework agreement that will set out a shared vision, principles, priorities and structures to negotiate a comprehensive and lasting reconciliation.

The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada started her visit to Tsilhqot'in Territory with a tour of the community of Tl'esqox's [new water system](#). After the signing ceremony the Minister met with Tsilhqot'in leadership, elders and youth from the six Tsilhqot'in communities.

Quotes

"An important step is taken towards renewing and strengthening Canada's relationship with the Tsilhqot'in Nation. This achievement demonstrates our commitment to working with partners in a true spirit of co-operation and respect to advance reconciliation and map the way together toward a shared prosperous future."

*The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, M.D., P.C., M.P.
Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs*

"We have much work ahead of us in creating a preliminary contribution agreement with the Federal Government, similar to the Nenqay Deni Accord that we have with the Province; which has allowed us to have the resources to negotiate with BC, without having to go through the lengthy BC treaty process which, in my opinion has proven to be ineffective for First Nations in BC. Having the resources to negotiate with the Federal government is essential in returning the Tsilhqot'in Nation to its rightful place as an equal partner with Canada economically and socially. This is an important step forward in enabling us to take care of our own people and much work will need to be done to re-establish a Nation to Nation relationship with Canada. Aside from dealing with this

issue, this is an unprecedented honor to host the INAC Federal minister for the first time in Canadian history on Tsilhqot'in soil. This visit and others like it in the future are essential in developing the relationship with communities on the ground that is required to make meaningful negotiations happen. This is a major honor and we are happy to share our communities' voices with the Minister on this momentous event."

Chief Joe Alphonse

Tribal Chairman, Tsilhqot'in National Government

"The Journey to get to this moment has been long for us as Tsilhqot'in people. This Letter of Understanding is the first signal we have had from Canada in recognition of our Aboriginal title lands and their commitment to improving the lives and wellbeing of our people. Surrounded by our Elders and youth, we are honoured to have Minister Bennett signing this historic Letter of Understanding."

Chief Francis Lacey

Tl'esqox First Nation, Tsilhqot'in National Government

Quick Facts

- On June 26, 2014 the Supreme Court of Canada declared that the Tsilhqot'in have Aboriginal title over approximately 1,750 square kilometers in the interior of British Columbia near Williams Lake. This was the first time in Canadian history that Aboriginal title was recognized.
- On March 3, 2016, Minister Bennett and the Tsilhqot'in leadership committed to reconciliation efforts when they agreed to develop and sign a Letter of Understanding.
- The Tsilhqot'in Nation comprises six communities: Tl'etinqox (Anaham), Tsi Del Del (Alexis Creek/Redstone), Yunosit'in Government (Stone), ?Esdilagh (Alexandria), Xeni Gwet'in First Nations Government (Nemiah) and the Tl'esqox (Toosey Band).

Associated Links

- [Tsilhqot'in National Government](#)
- [Toosey First Nation Turns on the Tap to a new Drinking Water System](#)

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