



**MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 17, 2021

**Tsilhqot'in Communities Decry High Stumpage Rates Hurting Jobs, Families & Businesses**

**Williams Lake, BC:** The Tsilhqot'in communities are decrying high stumpage rates and the adverse effects it is having on community member's jobs, families and businesses.

Recent hikes in stumpage rates are having a direct impact on the Tsilhqot'in communities of Tl'esqox and Yunešit'in. These small communities rely on blanket salvage permits for Douglas Fir to keep our businesses operational and our members working. The high stumpage rates are having economic consequences for the Tsilhqot'in communities by hurting our community forestry companies and community mills, and putting members out of work right before the holidays.

This is a devastating development for small communities. Meanwhile, major forestry operators continue to harvest in Tsilhqot'in territory. The Tsilhqot'in Nation calls for an urgent review of the situation and changes to the stumpage rates so that the forestry industry remains stable, equitable and supports small Indigenous forest companies operating in our own territories.

**Quotes:**

**Nits'il?in (Chief) Joe Alphonse, Tsilhqot'in National Government**

"We need to take a hard look at forestry in the Chilcotin. We have to ask the hard questions. Who continues to profit from the logging in our backyard? What benefits are we seeing from the resources in our own territory? It hits home yet again when you see our own members and businesses out of work while others continue to log our forests, with bigger and bigger impacts, for less and less profit. The Council of Tsilhqot'in Chiefs will be meeting early in the new year to hammer out our position on forestry and set out our next steps to address logging on our lands."

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**Nits'il?in (Chief) Lennon Solomon, Yunešit'in Government**

“Small Indigenous forestry companies can't ride out these huge spikes in stumpage fees. It might seem like small logging contracts, but it means jobs for our members and food on the table. It is devastating that we can't put our members to work because the stumpage rates are suddenly through the roof. It is putting people out of work at the very worst time, right over the holidays. It hurts our workers and their families and our whole community. I won't stand for it. If we can't benefit from the forests in our own territory, nobody should be logging. We need a better, fairer, system for Indigenous communities.”

**Nits'il?in (Chief) Francis Laceese, Tl'esqox First Government**

“It is not right that we can't afford to log in our own backyard while logging trucks of major operators continue to roll past our community. In Tl'esqox, we are building an economy based on smaller, sustainable logging, including training, harvesting, mill work and value-added. As Indigenous peoples, we are working hard to build ourselves up from the margins of the economy, but we are the first to suffer and the first to be shut down by impacts like these unfair stumpage rates. We won't stand by while others log our territory and we don't see fair benefits coming to our Communities. This issue has to be addressed immediately. Our Communities will stand firmly together to fight against this unfairness.”

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