



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Tsilhqot'in Nation Demand a Leadership Role to Address Prolific Offenders

Williams Lake, B.C.: The Tsilhqot'in Nation is demanding a leadership role to address prolific offenders in their communities after the B.C. Government recently announced its plans to appoint experts to investigate the issue and develop a plan post-pandemic.

The pandemic has amplified the issue of drug and alcohol addiction in First Nations communities and prompt and transformed action, which includes Indigenous-led solutions, is needed to address the root cause of what is leading to these prolific offences.

The Tsilhqot'in Nation is calling on the government to redirect some of its funding to supporting First Nations across the province to tackle this issue directly in their communities. Directing funding directly to municipalities and the RCMP has failed to achieve results and it is time to directly support First Nations communities to address the issues in a culturally appropriate and supported manner.

Quotes:

Nits'il?in (Chief) Joe Alphonse, O.B.C., Tribal Chair, Tsilhqot'in National Government

“Our Tsilhqot'in communities need to be able to tackle this problem directly. We are the ones who are closest to the social issues and addiction and substance abuse. We see the impacts in our communities everyday. Through our culture and the knowledge of our Elders, we know how to address it best. My community of Tl'etinqox has the majority of prolific offenders in the region. Federal, provincial and municipal governments have repeatedly failed to address the problems around addiction and prolific offenders. It should be obvious that funding for the RCMP is not the solution while there remains the unaddressed issue of systemic racism throughout the police force. The government's proposed plan seems to be more about scoring political points, rather than being about effectiveness and seriously addressing the issue. It is unacceptable that there was not one mention of Indigenous groups and partners being involved in this plan. It is time to consider a new approach, which includes more funding and support for Tsilhqot'in communities to deal with the underlying issues, as well as supporting our Tribal Police initiatives. It is far too costly to continue the failed policies and processes of the

D O W N T O W N O F F I C E

L A K E S I D E O F F I C E

253 4th Avenue North
Williams Lake, BC V2G 4T4
Ph: (250)-392-3918
Fax: (250)-398-5798

1729 South Lakeside Drive
Williams Lake, BC V2G 3A9
Ph: (778)-799- 2145
Fax: (778)-799-2142



government; our People are suffering and the lack of progress is leading to criminal ramifications.”

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Media Contact:

Jacey Warne
Communications Manager
T̓silhqot'in National Government
(778)-267-6197
jwarne@tsilhqotin.ca