



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs put BC and Canada on Notice Regarding Proper Rights and Title Holder Jurisdiction over Wet'suwet'en Lands

WET'SUWET'EN TERRITORY: Smithers, BC - The Wet'suwet'en *Dini ze'* and *Ts'ake'ze'* (male and female hereditary chiefs) have written to British Columbia (BC) and Canada in response to natural gas pipeline agreements that BC has entered into with *Indian Act* Band Councils within the Wet'suwet'en *Yintah* (traditional territory) to put them on notice regarding our proper rights and title holder jurisdiction over Wet'suwet'en lands.

Dini ze' and Ts'ake'ze are the proper rights and title holder

Since time immemorial the Wet'suwet'en *Dini ze'* and *Ts'ake'ze'* have governed, managed and utilized the resources from our *yintah* -- territory that we have occupied since time immemorial under our matrilineal clan and house governance system. Wet'suwet'en occupancy and utilization of our *yintah* is governed by our *Inuk Nu'at'en* (our laws) to ensure the sustainable use of resources, in accordance with our principle of *Waguus* (respect), for current and future generations.

In 1984, the Wet'suwet'en *Dini ze'* and *Ts'ake'ze'* began a court action on behalf of all Wet'suwet'en people claiming our self-government and title ownership over our Wet'suwet'en *yintah*, in what has become known as the historic *Delgamuukw-Gisday'wa* case. On December 11, 1997 the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) ruled that Wet'suwet'en rights and title have never been extinguished, and that Aboriginal title includes the right to exclusively use and occupy our land. Building on the shoulders of *Delgamuukw-Gisday'wa*, the SCC rendered a landmark judgment in the *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia* declaring Tsilhqot'in title to approximately 1,900 km² of their traditional territory. This decision cemented the fact that Aboriginal title includes the right to determine the uses to which title lands can be put, as well as the need for the Crown and proponents to seek our consent for major resource developments on our lands.

In the *Tsilhqot'in* case, the court made it clear that it is the, historic community of people sharing language, customs, traditions, historical experience, territory and resources at the time of first contact and at sovereignty assertion that are the proper

