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*Media Release*

**Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs Suspend Talks with PTP Proponents Due to Failure to Consult and Accommodate Wet'suwet'en Rights and Title Interests**

Wet'suwet'en Territory: Smithers, BC – Wet'suwet'en *Dini ze'* and *Tsakiy ze'* (Hereditary Male & Female Chiefs) today announced the suspension of talks with the Chevron and Apache Corporations regarding the proposed Pacific Trail Pipeline (PTP) project that seeks permission to cross 170 kilometers of the Wet'suwet'en *Yintah* "traditional territory" which comprises 22,000 km<sup>2</sup>. This decision follows prolonged frustration with the significantly flawed British Columbia (BC) Environmental Assessment process, and heretofore failure of BC and PTP proponents provision of the proposed project's technical information to the Hereditary Chiefs and Office of the Wet'suwet'en (OW) – who provide scientific, technical and cultural heritage data inventory support to the Hereditary Chiefs and House members - in a digital format compatible with OW information data management systems (i.e. shape file & excel format).

The Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs represented the collective Wet'suwet'en peoples in the landmark *Delgamuukw-Gisday'wa* Supreme Court of Canada case that affirmed Wet'suwet'en rights & title of the *Yintah* were never extinguished and includes the right to exclusive use, economic benefit and ability to determine the uses the land can be put to. The Tsilhqot'in Nation built upon this case securing a declaration of title to 1,700 km<sup>2</sup> of their traditional territory in a decision that also clarified BC and Canada's duty to consult and accommodate with respect to Aboriginal rights and title with the caution of the potential that project approvals and legislation can be overturned, quashed, and include claims for damages if consultation obligations are found to be inadequate, even prior to a declaration of title.

"BC, Canada and industry are well aware of the strength of the Wet'suwet'en rights and title claim across the entirety of our *Yintah* from the voluminous evidence provided in the *Delgamuukw-Gisday'wa* case. They are also aware that the proposed PTP project triggers the highest level of consultation pursuant to the spectrum established in the *Haida* decision," explained *Dini ze' Madeek, Gitdumden* (Bear) Clan. "We have repeated and documented our requests for PTP project information for over three years now including a meeting held on April 4, 2014 with the Honourable Minister Rich Coleman, Deputy Premier and Minister Responsible for Natural Gas Development. We explained that we required the project information in a format compatible with our data management system that holds our wildlife, plant, water, cultural, traditional use and fisheries information to enable us to fully understand

and determine the proposed projects impacts to our rights and title interests. Minister Coleman assured us that he'd get the information to us immediately, however, it is now 7 months later and this commitment has not been honored. It is this disregard and disrespect for our constitutionally protected rights that led to our decision to suspend talks with the proponents until our voices are heard and respected."

"It is time for BC and industry to respect and adhere to the hard-fought decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada in the *Delgamuukw-Gisday'wa*, *Tsilhqot'in*, *Sparrow*, *Haida* and many other cases concerning our *Wet'suwet'en* rights and title interests, which we have an indisputable track record of defending vigorously," stated Tsakiy ze' *Simke-yaks*, *Laksamshu* (Fireweed) Clan. "BC's singular myopic, hell-bent approach to their LNG strategy that overlooks fundamental legal requirements with respect to our constitutionally protected rights and title interests puts their LNG plan at peril if they continue to ignore us. It has always been, and continues to be our goal to find an honorable path towards reconciliation with BC and Canada, and we now call on them to meet and work with us on a government-to-government basis in the development of comprehensive and legitimate consent-based approval processes that ensure the appropriate respect and protection for our *Wet'suwet'en* rights and title. The Hereditary Chiefs hold a special inextricable relationship with the land, which is the source of our authority, for both our current and future *Wet'suwet'en* peoples. We must ensure that our future generations inherit their Clan and House territories in a pristine state that allows them to grow-on, live-from and enjoy our culture and traditional practices so they too can be distinctly *Wet'suwet'en*."

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