

DRAFT STATEMENT

DRAFT JOINT Statement – For Discussion

SMITHERS, BRITISH COLUMBIA (March 1, 2020) – [TBC] Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chief Woos, B.C. Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Scott Fraser and Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Carolyn Bennett, issued the following statement today:

“Over the past three days, we have had frank and substantive discussions, guided by Wiggus (respect), on issues around Wet'suwet'en rights and title.

These talks focused on two separate topics - the recognition of Wet'suwet'en rights and title throughout their Yintah (territory) and the issues arising out of the Coastal GasLink project. The topics were discussed separately.

With respect to rights and title, the parties focused intensely on commitments to an expedited process to implement Wet'suwet'en rights and title. The result of these discussions was a draft arrangement that will be reviewed by the Wet'suwet'en clan members through Wet'suwet'en governance protocols for ratification.

If ratified, Minister Fraser and Minister Bennett have agreed to return to Wet'suwet'en territory to sign. If ratified, the parties agreed to implement title on an expedited basis, to coordinate how we work together.

This arrangement for the Wet'suwet'en will breathe life into the Delgamuukw-Gisday'wa decision so that future generations do not have to face conflicts like the one they face today. As the late chief Wah tah Kwets (Pat Namox) said in the Delgamuukw case, “It is up to us to create a new memory in the minds of our children.”

Debbie Pierre, Executive Director of Office of the Wet'suwet'en: This is a momentous moment. The Dini ze and Ts'ake'ze of our past left this world with no certainty and pain. Today our Dini ze and Ts'ake'ze have carried their words forward in principle. It is time now that all Wet'suwet'en unite to build success for all. I encourage all to look past the fear of success but embrace the change that our forefathers saw for us.

On the Coastal GasLink project, the parties engaged in direct discussions, and explored means to come to a resolution. The province agreed to provide further information on the project. All parties at the table recognize that the differences relating to the CGL project remain.

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