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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hereditary Leaders from Across BC Stand Behind Wet'suwet'en and the Assertion of Their Traditional Laws

This morning, hundreds of hereditary leaders, supporters and allies from across BC gathered on Wet'suwet'en territory to stand in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en Chiefs as they affirm their title, rights and responsibilities to protect their ancestral lands.

On January 7th, In support of a fracked gas pipeline, a military scale assault of RCMP armed with assault weapons aggressively forced entry at the Gitdumt'en checkpoint and forcibly removed unarmed Wet'suwet'en members from their land. The Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs quelled the one sided violence under duress to ensure the protection of the Unist'ot'en community with a temporary truce. The Hereditary Chiefs maintain that not only are their people's right to protect their lands, but even Canada's laws are on their side.

“Our rights to these lands have never been extinguished, the assumed and presumed jurisdiction of the provincial and federal governments is misleading and false,” said Chief Na'Moks of the Wet'suwet'en. “Today's show of support from our neighbours and allies around the world proves the Wet'suwet'en do not stand alone. Our rights to water, air and land are not only Indigenous rights but human rights.”

The Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs have maintained their use and occupancy of their lands and hereditary governance system for thousands of years. Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs are the Title Holders and maintain authority and jurisdiction to make decisions on unceded lands. The 22,000 square km of Wet'suwet'en Territory is divided into 5 clans and 13 house groups. Each clan within the Wet'suwet'en Nation has full jurisdiction under their law to control their territory.

Chief Kloum Kuhn stated, “The five clans of the Wet'suwet'en will never support the Coastal Gaslink (CGL) project and remain opposed to any pipelines on our traditional lands. There is no legitimate agreement with CGL as reported in the media, and we stand behind the Unist'ot'en and Gitdumt'en. Under 'Anuc niwh'it'en, Wet'suwet'en rule of law, all five clans of the Wet'suwet'en have unanimously opposed all pipeline proposals and given no authority to Coastal Gaslink/TransCanada to do work on Wet'suwet'en lands.”

The Wet'suwet'en are overwhelmed by the massive outpouring of support around the world, and are forever grateful for their support and honoured that they stand behind us as we continue to affirm our rightful title to our traditional territories.

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