



UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

News Release

October 26, 2026

First Ministers Meeting Fails to Result in Concrete Action

(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil Waututh)/ Vancouver, B.C. – October 26, 2026) Today, First Nations leaders gathered with the Prime Minister and provincial and territorial premiers in Ottawa for the First Nations First Ministers' Meeting. The Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) is deeply disappointed that federal, provincial, and territorial governments failed to commit to significant action to uphold First Nations title and rights, and jurisdiction, and to identify the just and equitable resolution of First Nations' historical claims as an immediate priority.

UBCIC recognizes the significance of this gathering and the ongoing efforts of First Nations leadership to secure meaningful dialogue with Canada's First Ministers. The meeting presents an important opportunity to advance First Nations priorities at the highest political level; however, UBCIC remains deeply concerned that governments' increasing emphasis on economic development, investment, and the accelerated approval of major projects continues to take precedence over the recognition, respect and implementation of First Nations title and rights, including the right to fair redress for historical grievances.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President, stated "We thank the First Nations leaders who worked tirelessly to bring governments to the table and advance our collective priorities, despite government's reticence for real change. We also want to thank the fearless First Nations people protesting outside the meeting today, as well as the allied labour and environmental organizations that will be standing with Indigenous peoples and protesting Bill C-39 in Ottawa this week. It is critical that we object to the gold rush-era politics we are experiencing nationally and provincially, that ignore the free, prior and informed consent of all impacted title holders, retreat from legal obligations to resolve historical claims, and that stand to seriously exacerbate the climate emergency through unfettered fossil fuel extraction."

Chief Marilyn Slett, UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer, stated "Canada continues to make commitments to reconciliation and the implementation of the UN Declaration, yet legislation like Bill C-37 demonstrates how far we still have to go. First Nations have been clear that access to clean drinking water must be accompanied by recognition of our jurisdiction over our waters and meaningful federal accountability. We cannot continue to accept legislation that falls short of these

Kamloops Office

209 - 345 Chief Alex Thomas Way
Kamloops, BC, V2H-1H1
Phone: 250-828-9746
Fax: 250-828-0319

Vancouver Office

Suite 401 - 312 Main Street
Vancouver, BC, V6A-2T2
Phone: 604-684-0231 or toll free: 800-793-9701
Fax: 604-684-5726

www.ubcic.bc.ca



UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

fundamental obligations while governments celebrate progress on reconciliation. Today's meeting was supposed to lead to meaningful changes in how governments uphold their commitments to First Nations, and it is frustrating that did not happen."

Chief Councillor Linda Innes, UBCIC Vice-President, concluded: "The priorities of First Nations cannot be reduced to economic opportunities and major project approvals. Our communities are working every day to protect our languages and cultures, care for our lands and waters, and build healthy futures for our children and grandchildren. These priorities deserve the same attention and urgency as the economic interests governments are so eager to advance. A meaningful relationship with First Nations must reflect the full range of issues that matter to our Peoples, not just those that fit within government agendas."

UBCIC calls on First Ministers to ensure that follow-up to today's meeting leads to concrete actions to implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, address outstanding historical injustices, and uphold First Nations title and rights, and jurisdiction. Commitments to sustained dialogue and political cooperation must be accompanied by corresponding changes to legislation, policy, and government decision-making.

-30-

Media inquiries:

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President, 250-490-5314

Chief Councillor Linda Innes, Vice-President, 778-884-5663

Chief Marilyn Slett, Secretary-Treasurer, 250-957-7721

UBCIC is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

For more information, please visit www.ubcic.bc.ca

Kamloops Office

209 - 345 Chief Alex Thomas Way
Kamloops, BC, V2H-1H1
Phone: 250-828-9746
Fax: 250-828-0319

Vancouver Office

Suite 401 - 312 Main Street
Vancouver, BC, V6A-2T2
Phone: 604-684-0231 or toll free: 800-793-9701
Fax: 604-684-5726

www.ubcic.bc.ca