



UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

News Release

November 27, 2025

UBCIC Strongly Rejects Canada–Alberta Pipeline MOU that Ignores First Nations Rights and Threatens Environment

(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətał (Tsleil Waututh)/ Vancouver, B.C. – November 27, 2025) The Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) is loudly objecting to the Memorandum of Understanding that Canada and Alberta signed this morning, which explicitly endorses the construction of a massive new bitumen pipeline from Alberta to the B.C. coast, proposes lifting or amending the federal tanker ban, and proposes Indigenous “co-ownership” of the pipeline, all negotiated without involvement of B.C. coastal First Nations or adequate environmental, climate and rights safeguards.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President, stated “This MOU is nothing less than a high risk and deeply irresponsible agreement that sacrifices Indigenous peoples, coastal communities, and the environment for political convenience. By explicitly endorsing a new bitumen pipeline to B.C.’s coast and promising to rewrite the *Oil Tanker Moratorium Act*, the federal government is resurrecting one of the most deeply flawed and divisive ideas in Canadian energy politics. British Columbians and First Nations have been crystal clear: crude oil tankers do not belong in the Great Bear Sea. We will not stand by while the Carney government and Alberta attempt to bulldoze our rights and disregard the catastrophic risks of a spill in the corporate profit interests of the global fossil fuel industry. No bilateral deal can extinguish our inherent title and rights, and no federal legislation can erase the Crown’s obligation to obtain free, prior, and informed consent. The answer is still no and always will be. We will not stand idly by.”

Chief Marilyn Slett, UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer, added “Any attempt to use a federal–provincial agreement to sidestep Indigenous consent is fundamentally unlawful. The federal government cannot negotiate away our rights, nor can it use new legislation or political deals to avoid its obligations under the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and the *Impact Assessment Act*. I cannot overstate how alarming it is to see the federal government signaling a willingness to dismantle or weaken the *Oil Tanker Moratorium Act*. Our communities have fought for generations to keep crude oil tankers out of these dangerous and ecologically critical waters, and we secured the tanker ban because the risks of a spill are simply too great to bear. This MOU was negotiated without the involvement of the very Nations who would shoulder those risks, and to suggest ‘Indigenous co-ownership’ of a pipeline while ignoring the clear

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opposition of Coastal First Nations is unacceptable. The federal government must unequivocally reaffirm the tanker ban, respect our stewardship authority, and abandon any plan that would bring bitumen tankers into the Great Bear Sea. We are grateful that the Province of B.C. has listened to us, and we were honoured to sign the [North Coast Protection Declaration](#) with Premier Eby several weeks ago. We urge Canada to realize that this MOU is a waste of time, and join us in protecting our precious lands and waters.”

Several weeks ago, UBCIC stresses that no federal-provincial agreement can diminish or override the constitutional protections that safeguard First Nations title and rights. Coastal First Nations have made their position clear for decades: crude oil tankers are not welcome in their territories, and any attempt to force a pipeline through B.C.’s coast will face unified resistance. The federal government risks repeating the failures of Northern Gateway, where inadequate consultation, environmental concerns, and powerful Indigenous opposition ultimately led to its downfall.

UBCIC is calling on the federal government to immediately clarify its intentions regarding the tanker ban, to retract any commitment to weakening or amending the *Oil Tanker Moratorium Act*, and to confirm publicly that no pipeline will advance without the free, prior, and informed consent of the First Nations whose territories would be affected, and to ensure that British Columbia and First Nations are full partners in any future discussions regarding energy corridors.

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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

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