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New Federal Government an opportunity to advance treaty negotiations

VANCOUVER – Congratulations to the elected and re-elected members of Parliament, including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the new minority Liberal government, following the October 21 federal election.

The Treaty Commission looks forward to continued progress on the recognition of Aboriginal rights in Canada and advancing self-determination and self-government through concluding treaty negotiations. This critical work requires the participation of all political parties working together to advance the recognition of Indigenous lands and rights. This must include the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration).

“Negotiations are the essence of self-determination, which is a foundational right of the UN Declaration. There is no better mechanism for the recognition and protection of Indigenous lands and rights, and for reconciliation with the federal and provincial governments, than negotiations,” said Chief Commissioner Celeste Haldane. “As the independent facilitator of treaty negotiations, the Treaty Commission will ensure negotiations are conducted fairly and in good faith so that the process lives up to this potential.”

Several key initiatives were achieved federally and provincial this past year, including:

- six tripartite agreements between First Nations, Canada, and British Columbia, accelerating negotiations based on recognition of lands, territories, and rights
- new rights recognition framework for treaty negotiations uniquely co-developed with the federal and provincial governments and BC First Nations
- new fiscal framework to improve funding and better support successful Indigenous self-government
- commitment to eliminate negotiation support funding loans

“These are some of the most significant policy changes and commitments since the constitutional entrenchment of Aboriginal and treaty rights in the early 1980’s, and the launch of the treaty negotiations process in the early 1990’s,” said Chief Commissioner Haldane. “It is imperative that the new minority federal government implement these commitments as quickly as possible.”

The Treaty Commission sends special congratulations to Puglaas (Jody Wilson-Raybould) – former BC Treaty Commissioner – for her historic re-election as Independent in the Vancouver-Granville riding. The Treaty Commission looks forward to working with Puglaas and all members of Parliament to advance Indigenous rights recognition in Canada.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Odette Wilson / Communications Advisor / t: 604-482-9215 / c: 604-290-4059 / owilson@bctreaty.ca
Mark Smith / Director of Process / msmith@bctreaty.ca

About the BC Treaty Commission

The Treaty Commission is the independent body responsible for overseeing treaty negotiations among the governments of Canada, BC and First Nations in BC. It has three roles: facilitation, funding, and public information and education. Visit www.bctreaty.ca to learn more about the Treaty Commission.