



BRITISH
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TĀLTĀN
TAHLTAN CENTRAL
GOVERNMENT



Tahltan
Band Council



Iskut
Band Council

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2021EMLI0041-001128
June 10, 2021

Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation
Tahltan Central Government

Tahltan and B.C. further their vision of shared prosperity

VICTORIA - The Tahltan Central Government, Iskut Band Council, Tahltan Band Council and the Province have entered into a Shared Prosperity Agreement (SPA), setting the foundation to collaboratively achieve long-term comprehensive reconciliation and land-use predictability.

"The Tahltan Nation is working to modernize our relationship with the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada to achieve effective shared decision-making and collaborative stewardship for Tahltan Territory," said Chad Norman Day, president, Tahltan Central Government. "The SPA is a part of the important work of the Tahltan Stewardship Initiative, which will transform how things are done for the better, ensure our culture survives and thrives for future generations, and will provide certainty for Tahltans, the Province, industry and other stakeholders. At the core of any future government-to-government relationships must be respect and recognition of Tahltan title and rights."

Premier John Horgan said: "Reconciliation is about working together to lift people up, developing strong partnerships and creating opportunities for collaboration in every part of the province. Together as partners, we're taking an important step forward to build a brighter future for Tahltan members and all British Columbians."

The SPA commits both governments to accelerate negotiation of an economic-oriented comprehensive reconciliation agreement and to seek federal participation in those negotiations. As well, both governments agree to co-develop a land-use plan, complete the first phase of that plan by 2023 and to test new processes related to mineral permitting, placer mining and land use. The Province is providing \$20 million to the Tahltan Central Government to support economic growth and reconciliation and to implement the agreement.

"We must safeguard the Tahltan way of life and encourage participation in the decision-making process on matters that impact our communities. The SPA allows us to build a deeper government-to-government relationship between the Province and our Nation based on the recognition of Tahltan title and rights," said Chief Marie Quock, Chief of the Iskut Band Council. "We will keep working together for our lands, wildlife, and the benefit of our people, values and culture."

Nathan Cullen, Minister of State for Lands and Natural Resource Operations and MLA for Stikine said: "This historic government-to-government agreement is important for the Tahltan and for the economic future of our region. The collaborative decision-making that will come from this will lead to greater land use predictability within Tahltan territory and support prosperity for future generations of Tahltans."

Tahltan territory encompasses a large portion of the area in northwestern B.C. known as the

Golden Triangle for its abundance of mineral deposits. Mining plays a significant role in the regional economy, with two mines currently operating in the territory that account for approximately 950 direct jobs and approximately 1,900 jobs in the supply and services industry. Mining projects in the region attracted nearly \$1.8 billion in international investments from July 2018 to March 2021.

"As Tahltans, we honour our connection to the land and work to provide opportunities to our Nation that support our culture and values," said Chief Carmen McPhee, Tahltan Band Council. "This agreement marks an important opportunity to strengthen collaboration on our shared interest and further develop a government-to-government relationship with the Province based on respect."

Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, said: "The Tahltan Nation and the Province have built a strong government-to-government relationship together that advances reconciliation, ensures Tahltan members benefit from economic activities in their territory and preserves the important cultural and environmental values on the land that are critically important to the Tahltan people. I see a bright future ahead for the Tahltan people and the entire northwestern region of our province, and we look forward to the many opportunities that will emerge from our important partnership."

The agreement between both governments acknowledges that economic growth and the development of a world-class mining region can only be achieved with continued progress on other important matters. This includes continued collaboration on wildlife management that recognizes Tahltan's Aboriginal hunting and governance rights, and is aligned with B.C.'s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

"This economic partnership will open the door for new and exciting world-class mineral development in the region, creating economic prosperity for members of the Tahltan Nation and for B.C.," said Bruce Ralston, Minister of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation. "This agreement will further strengthen the relationship between the Province and the Tahltan Nation as we work together to foster economic growth, while providing stability for the entire region."

Katrine Conroy, Minister of Forest, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, said: "The Province and Tahltan Central Government have been working together to advance their shared interests in building an enduring, resilient government-to-government relationship in respect of land and resource use. This agreement will enhance community, social and economic development within the Tahltan Territory."

Recent government-to-government work includes a partnership between both governments, Skeena Resources Limited, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the BC Parks Foundation to create a land conservancy adjacent to the Mt. Edziza Provincial Park, as well as financial support to improve air access to the Dease Lake Airport (the regional airport within Tahltan territory).

"The Mount Edziza Conservancy strengthens protection for this ecologically diverse area as we continue to collaborate with and learn from the Tahltan to better understand how combining science and traditional teachings can provide environmental and economic well-being," said George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. "This agreement highlights what can be accomplished when we work together toward the common goals of

reconciliation and protection of the environment and wildlife in this vital area, in a way that supports economic prosperity."

While more work remains to be done to advance their shared interests, this agreement establishes the foundation for a world-class long-term partnership.

Learn More:

To find out more about the Tahltan Central Government, visit <https://tahltan.org>

For information about the Mt. Edziza Land Conservancy, visit:
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021ENV0025-000657>

To learn more about the Dease Lake Airport Upgrades, visit:
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021EMLI0032-000713>

Information about the B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act can be found here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/indigenous-people/new-relationship/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples>

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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Initiatives within the Shared Prosperity Agreement

The Shared Prosperity Agreement (SPA) entered into by the Tahltan Central Government, the Iskut and Tahltan Band Councils and the Province of British Columbia commit the parties to work together on the following initiatives:

- Immediate measures to address issues impacting the parties' relationship.
- Focused negotiation of a comprehensive reconciliation agreement, known as a foundation agreement, to define the parties' intergovernmental partnership and transparent "rules of the road."
- A co-designed and phased-in land use plan across the Tahltan Territory that recognizes Tahltan rights and title.
- A \$16-million provincial contribution towards Tahltan economic self-determination.
- A \$4-million provincial contribution of implementation capacity funding for all initiatives under the SPA.

About the Tahltan Nation

The Tahltan Central Government is the administrative governing body of the Tahltan Nation. The Iskut Band and the Tahltan Band continue to govern Tahltan interests with respect to the Indian Act in the communities of Iskut, Dease Lake and Telegraph Creek. The Tahltan Central Government is the representative government of the Tahltan Nation with respect to the inherent and collective Aboriginal Title and Rights shared by all Tahltan people.

The Tahltan Nation's Territory spans 95,933 square kilometres of northwestern British Columbia, or the equivalent of 11% of the province. Tahltan Territory includes 70% of B.C.'s Golden Triangle.

For more information, visit: <https://link.edgepilot.com/s/6f0b1252/v2SSR5ohh0SZYJbfXro24g?u=http://www.tahltan.org/>

The SPA, signed in March 2020, can be found here:
[http://news.gov.bc.ca/files/Shared Prosperity Agreement.pdf](http://news.gov.bc.ca/files/Shared_Prosperty_Agreement.pdf)

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