

First Nations Leadership Council

INFORMATION BULLETIN



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Introduction

The First Nations Leadership Council is sending out this information bulletin to all First Nations in BC to update them on recent activities.

These bulletins, which are in addition to the regular reporting done by the First Nations Summit, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, and the BC Assembly of First Nations, will be sent out quarterly.

Expect a more comprehensive bulletin in March 2006.

1. Federal Election

The **federal election will be held on Monday, January 23**. The First Nations Leadership Council strongly encourages **all First Nations to vote** in support of the First Ministers' Meeting commitments of \$5.1 billion and the Transformative Change Accord. Please see our websites for more details on the aboriginal issues platforms of the major political parties:

www.bcafn.ca
www.ubcic.bc.ca
www.fns.bc.ca

2. Transformative Change Accord (November 25, 2005)

At the First Ministers' Meeting on Aboriginal Issues, hosted by Westbank First Nation on November 24-25, 2005, the First Nations Leadership Council signed a *Transformative Change Accord* with the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada. The Transformative Change Accord is a made-in-BC agenda for regional implementation of First Ministers' Meeting commitments, as well as other priorities, such as processes for reconciling Aboriginal rights and title, and improving access to lands and resources, and revenue sharing. Work will soon begin on developing the detailed implementation strategy for this Accord, which must be completed by December 2006.

Extensive consultation with First Nations on this implementation strategy will be essential. Copies of the Transformative Change Accord are available from our offices and on our websites.

3. First Nations New Relationship Capacity Fund

In the September 14, 2005 Budget Update, the Province of British Columbia announced a new \$100 million First Nations New Relationship Capacity Fund to assist First Nations in their efforts to build their own direct capacity to participate in the New Relationship.

The legislation required to move the funds out of the BC Government and into a separate entity (legislated corporation) is now being developed and the Fund will be established before the end of the fiscal year. By then, the first Board of Directors for the Fund will be identified, including representation from the Leadership Council. The first Board of Directors will be required to develop a strategic plan in order to begin operating the Fund.

Key to developing the strategic plan will be a consultation process with BC First Nations, as mandated by Chiefs at the BC Regional Chiefs' Special Assembly held in Kamloops, October 17-19, 2005. The first Board of Directors will develop and implement, in a timely manner, a consultation plan to receive input from First Nations on their needs and priorities and long-term uses for the Fund.

Timeline for First Nation New Relationship Capacity Fund Legislation:

January 2006 to mid-February 2006

1. First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) and BC Government develop the terms of reference, general purposes, principles and mechanics of funding structure;
2. Terms of reference, general purposes, principles, and mechanics of funding structure reviewed and confirmed by New Relationship Main Table (FNLC-Deputy Ministers);
3. Information on funding structure, etc., to Treasury board – January 24th;
4. Ministers briefed;
5. Draft legislation prepared, based on terms of reference, general purposes, principles, and mechanics of funding structure

6. Draft legislation reviewed by FNLC prior to introduction in February 2006;
7. First Directors selected by FNLC and appointed by Order-in-Council (to come into force upon enactment of legislation).

Mid-February 2006 to March 2006

1. Draft legislation introduced in Legislature (FNLC in attendance);
2. First Reading;
3. Second Reading;
4. Committee Stage;
5. Third Reading;
6. Legislation proclaimed;
7. First Directors select financial institution to receive the allocation and establish an account;
8. First Nation New Relationship Capacity allocation paid into the Account;
9. First Directors begin their work.

The First Nations Leadership Council will continue to provide updates to First Nations on developments regarding the Fund over the next couple of months.

4. Interim Agreement on Forest & Range Opportunities

The Interim Agreement on Forest & Range Opportunities (formerly the "Forest and Range Agreement") is a revised template agreement that can be used by BC First Nations in negotiating interim forest and range opportunities with the Ministry of Forests. This revised template has been approved by the BC Cabinet and the MOF will brief its staff on the new template in late January 2006. The Leadership Council will forward the final version of the new template agreement to First Nations in the near future.

5. Mountain Pine Beetle

For the latest information on the First Nations Interim Mountain Pine Beetle Working Group, see their website at www.fnmpb.ca.

Please

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bulletin away...*

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