

## **Provincial Cabinet Minister Meeting**

**Honourable John Rustad**

**Ministry of Aboriginal Relations & Reconciliations**

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**Date:** September 25, 2014 @ 9:20 AM

**Location:** Alpine Room B

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### **PURPOSE**

Joint meeting with Honourable John Rustad, Minister of Aboriginal Relations & Reconciliations and the District of Ucluelet to discuss:

- 1) Concerns over Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations Tribal Park Claims; loss of potential economic development opportunities
- 2) Update on relationship with treaty nations

### **BACKGROUND**

The District of Ucluelet has visited our neighbouring First Nation communities to speak to our common concerns. We, as Council, have serious concerns over the impact of land use changes, for example the acclamation by the Tla-o-qui-aht that large areas of the Kennedy and adjacent areas (58,000 Ha) are being claimed by the TFN to be Tribal Parks. As we understand it neither the Provincial nor the Federal Government have endorsed this claim; yet the Federal Parks have been providing training to TFN on how to manage a Park, and citizens have been told to leave the area as they are trespassing on TFN lands.

We seek direction and assistance from both levels of government to address these situations, and in the Tribal Park case advise the TFN that they have no authority to enforce their own laws on these lands.

The area in question represents enormous economic opportunities to everyone in the area, and, as such, needs the respective governments who are responsible for these lands to undertake a process to re-establish ownership and control over the area; and to enter into constructive discussions to determine who and what can be undertaken on these 58,000 ha.

There is room for both forestry and mining and other economic undertakings within environmentally sound practices. For one group to choose to dictate everything that happens in this area, and become the sole benefactor of any and all economic activity goes against the very roots of democratic policy.

On a related issue, is the Minister able to relate this situation to recent legal decisions in the north, regarding land ownership and economic activities and FN rights of "consultation" on traditional lands?

## **CONCLUSION**

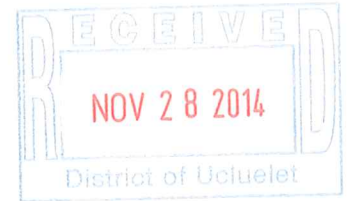
We are looking for the Minister to undertake a thorough review of the TFN Tribal Park Claim, and ensure that only through structured Treaty Settlement negotiations will any lands be awarded to TFN for their use and control, and even then such lands will be required to meet existing Federal and Provincial regulations, and be carried out with due consideration for adjacent Municipalities and First Nation neighbours.

We are looking for the Minister to understand the regional and provincial impact of poorly defined and inconsistent First Nation referral processes; to understand our concerns of economic impact and of the protracted and restrictive nature of our communities.

## **NEXT STEPS**

We would be prepared to work with Ministerial Staff to demonstrate regional partnerships that reflect the economic needs of all the communities.

We would then seek a response from the Ministry as to what corrective action is and will be undertaken.



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Bill Irving  
Mayor  
District of Ucluelet  
PO Box 999  
Ucluelet BC V0R 3A0

Dear Mayor Irving:

I am writing to express my appreciation to you and your colleagues for meeting with me at the Union of British Columbia Municipalities Convention on September 25, 2014.

During our discussion, you expressed concern about logging in a local park, specifically that the cut did not appear to be managed and that the access road appeared to be unsafe.

As committed, I shared your thoughts with my colleague, the Honourable Steve Thomson, Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNR). For further information, I would recommend that you follow up with Mary Bauto, Resource Manager, FLNR, at 250-731-3016.

You also had questions about the historic *Tsilhqot'in* Supreme Court decision and how it will impact local governments.

The Supreme Court of Canada decision, *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia*, is a significant milestone that provides greater certainty regarding Aboriginal title and the Province's rights and responsibilities. The decision also supports the Province's commitment to pursue negotiated settlements with First Nations. Therefore, the Province is working with First Nations, the federal government and industry to determine the best approach forward together following the *Tsilhqot'in* decision.

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We believe that existing relationships with First Nations will provide both provincial and local governments with a strong foundation as we move forward in partnership to explore how to implement the Supreme Court ruling and the historic opportunities that lay before us.

Again, thank you for your time at the convention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Rustad". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

John Rustad  
Minister

pc: Honourable Steve Thomson  
Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

Mary Bauto  
Resource Manager  
Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations