



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
March 20, 2015

BC Treaty Commission – Chief Commissioner

Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver – Representatives of the BC Government provided notice yesterday to the First Nations Summit (FNS) Political Executive that the Province has determined that it is not willing to support the appointment of George Abbott to the position of Chief Commissioner of the BC Treaty Commission (BCTC).

The FNS Political Executive is taken aback and seriously disappointed in this late arriving decision, which comes after six months of discussions among the three Principals to the treaty negotiation process (Canada, BC and the FNS). Disturbingly, this decision also comes after the recent First Nations Summit Chiefs' Resolution #1014.02 formally appointing Mr. Abbott as Chief Commissioner. The Province's blatant disregard for agreement among the Principals and processes already undertaken is unacceptable. This situation raises questions about our ability to rely upon agreements made among the Principals and the provincial government's commitment to treaty negotiations in BC and to achieving reconciliation with First Nations.

The FNS Political Executive remains committed to ensuring a Chief Commissioner is appointed as soon as possible and is engaged in discussions with representatives from the BC Government and the Government of Canada regarding next steps. As the selection process continues, it is our understanding that the BC Treaty Commission will continue to carry out its mandated work. In this regard, the BCTC commissioners may select an interim Chief Commissioner following the process set out in the *BC Treaty Commission Act*:

S.8 (2) In the event of the absence or incapacity of the Chief Commissioner or if that office is vacant, the other commissioners may designate, by unanimous agreement, one of them to act as Chief Commissioner during the absence, incapacity or vacancy, and the commissioner so designated has and may exercise all of the powers and perform all of the duties and functions of the Chief Commissioner.

The FNS is comprised of a majority of First Nations and Tribal Councils in BC and provides a forum for First Nations in British Columbia to address issues related to Treaty negotiations as well as other issues of common concern. As one of the Principals of the treaty negotiation process along with Canada and BC, the First Nations Summit plays an important and ongoing role in ensuring that the process for conducting Treaty negotiations is accessible to all First Nations.

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For further comment please contact First Nations Summit Task Group members:

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