



New Relationship Agreement reached between Snuneymuxw and the Nanaimo Port Authority

Nanaimo, BC/Snuneymuxw Territory
December 23, 2020

The Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN) and the Nanaimo Port Authority (NPA) have entered into a historic Relationship Agreement that provides for a strong partnership and shared commitments and goals based on sustainable development.

Today's announcement is a first step and the timing of the conclusion of the Relationship Agreement coincides with the commemoration of the Treaty of 1854, entered into 166 years ago on December 23, 1854 between the Crown and Snuneymuxw First Nation. The Relationship Agreement upholds the importance of the Treaty of 1854 to the Snuneymuxw peoples, and the obligation to respect and build upon the treaty rights of Snuneymuxw.

Specifically, through the Relationship Agreement the Nanaimo region will see the following benefits:

- Relationship based on recognition of the Snuneymuxw First Nations peoples' inherent Aboriginal and treaty rights, ensuring that a foundation of recognition, respect and mutual collaboration ground all work;
- New processes to review and approve projects and initiatives which build on the free, prior and informed consent of Snuneymuxw First Nation in keeping with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*;
- The identification of shared areas of interest for collaboration, including environmental stewardship, marine safety and cultural activities, such as identifying places with accurate Hul'q'umin'um names and concepts.
- The shared goals to engage in discussions with Snuneymuxw for all new major projects in NPA jurisdiction where NPA is the proponent, and encouraging other project proponents who may seek to advance a new major project in NPA jurisdiction to also enter into discussions directly with SFN; and
- Advancing greater progress on the mid-Island forestry initiative to ensure forestry economic activity continues in a sustainable manner consistent with the recognition and affirmation of the rights of the Snuneymuxw peoples, and in collaboration with Industry and Government established through a series of Agreements in recent years between British Columbia and SFN.

Critically, the announcement is also a significant advancement in economic reconciliation with the Snuneymuxw First Nation that is consistent with establishing proper relations based on the recognition of rights, the implementation of historic treaties, and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. The partnership supports Snuneymuxw's work to rebuild their economy and fulfil

their responsibilities for their people and Territory, including through the mid-Island forestry initiative underway over the past number of years.

In recent years, NPA and SFN have worked together on a project-by-project basis, and this has been valuable to build a foundation for this new Relationship Agreement, that includes a clearer acknowledgement of the proper process, and shared objectives, to ensure that the relationships and businesses developed within the ambit of the NPA meet the highest standard in respect for and engagement with SFN.

Quotes

Chief Michael Wyse: “The relationship with the Port of Nanaimo is a key issue for the Snuneymuxw people. The Port operates within our core village and marine areas, and is near the very location of the negotiation and conclusion of the Treaty of 1854 with our forefathers and Sir James Douglas on behalf of the Crown. For a long time, there was little respect for our peoples, our history and our rights. Looking back on the 166 years to today, this Agreement is the first time the proper recognition and acknowledgement of that treaty relationship has been made. In practical terms, this means that all activities conducted in our territory must be with our consent and participation, and our people are not opposed to sustainable development in the Port and marine areas within our territories. There are many important economic prosperity and sustainable development opportunities before us. With this Agreement, we will ensure that Snuneymuxw people, businesses and partnerships are involved at every stage and a full participant in the growth and development of the NPA economic activities. We see this major shift in our relationship with NPA as of benefit to all in the Nanaimo area, as we can put behind us the era of denial of our rights and status in relation to the economic development of the Port and marine areas.”

Nanaimo Port Authority Board Chair Donna Hais: “These agreements are extremely important as we move forward. They demonstrate our willingness and ability to work together on projects of mutual interest, as we all want everyone in this region to prosper.”

Nanaimo Port Authority President and CEO Ian Marr: “The Port Authority is extremely pleased to have created a relationship agreement with Snuneymuxw based on recognition, mutual respect and understanding. The Protocol allows us to work together towards shared goals and collaboration in areas of mutual interest.”

Mayor Leonard Krog: “This is a real Christmas present for the whole City, a vital step on the road to reconciliation that builds on the work of all who love this City and have faith in its future. Congratulations to the leaders, Chief Wyse, his Council, Port Chair Donna Hais and her board for putting community first and making this happen.”

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