



February 18, 2020

The Right Hon. Justin Trudeau  
Prime Minister of Canada

The Hon. John Horgan  
Premier of British Columbia

*Via email*

**OPEN LETTER: THE WSÁNEĆ LEADERSHIP COUNCIL STANDS IN SOLIDARITY WITH WET'SUWET'EN HEREDITARY CHIEFS AND CALLS UPON GOVERNMENT TO RESPECT WET'SUWET'EN JURISDICTION**

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Premier Horgan,

The WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council—representing the Tsartlip, Tsawout, and Tseycum First Nations—calls upon the federal and provincial government to uphold their commitments to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and respect Wet'suwet'en jurisdiction on Wet'suwet'en lands. Article 32 (2) of UNDRIP states:

States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.

Despite the many promises made by the federal and provincial governments, it is clear that this process has not occurred. While we acknowledge that the federal and provincial governments have engaged with the Wet'suwet'en Chiefs and Councils, the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs—the “representative institution” of the Wet'suwet'en, as recognized in the *Delgamuukw* decision—have not been properly consulted, and they have not provided their free, prior and informed consent for the Coastal Gaslink Pipeline Project. Instead, in the face of active and sustained opposition to this project by Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs, the federal and provincial governments issued permits approving the project, sought injunctions through the courts, and permitted the RCMP to use force against Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs and their supporters. The Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs have been denied the right to enact Wet'suwet'en jurisdiction and uphold their sacred obligations to the land.





Much like the Wet'suwet'en, WSÁNEĆ people must fulfill the sacred obligations given to us by XÁ,EL,S (Creator). Much like the Wet'suwet'en, our lands were taken from us, our traditional practices were criminalized, we were removed as care-takers of the land, and it became increasingly difficult for us to honour our sacred obligations. The Wet'suwet'en struggle is the struggle of WSÁNEĆ people and all Indigenous peoples across Canada.

As a result, the WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council calls on the provincial and federal government to respect Wet'suwet'en jurisdiction, implement the *Delgamuukw* and *Tsilhqot'in* Supreme Court Decisions regarding Aboriginal Title, uphold the commitments made to reconciliation and UNDRIP, and meet with the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs to find a peaceful resolution.

HÍSWKE SIIÁM,

Chief Don Tom  
Chief, Tsartlip First Nation

Chief Nicholas Claxton  
Chief, Tsawout First Nation

Chief Tanya Jimmy  
Chief, Tseycum First Nation