
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation

Agreements address Columbia River Treaty impacts on Indigenous Nations

VICTORIA – The Ktunaxa, Secwépemc and Syilx Okanagan Nations and their members will benefit from new interim agreements that share revenue generated from the Columbia River Treaty.

Through the three separate interim agreements, the Ktunaxa Nation, Secwépemc Nation and Syilx Okanagan Nation will each receive 5% of the revenue generated through the sale of Canada's share of downstream power benefits under the treaty, otherwise known as the Canadian Entitlement. The proposed interim agreements will share this revenue over four years.

“This interim agreement is significant for us,” said Kathryn Teneese, Chair of Ktunaxa Nation Council. “It’s an acknowledgment of impacts to Ktunaxa rights and title, and is one step on the path of reconciliation. Ktunaxa Nation Council, on behalf of our four member First Nations, will continue our broader collaborative work on Columbia River Treaty renewal with the other partners in this agreement. Ktunaxa perspectives are vital to this treaty process, and we value being at the table with the other Indigenous Nations, along with British Columbia and Canada.”

ki law na Chief Clarence Louie, Okanagan Nation Alliance Tribal Chair, said: “This Interim Revenue Sharing Agreement is a historic first step for our government-to-government relationship. For far too long, we have been excluded from decisions that directly impact the Syilx Nation. These previous decisions lacked any form of consent and often left us with only devastating impacts. With this announcement, the provincial government has demonstrated a level of integrity to finally do the right thing. In part, this is the result of continued efforts by the Okanagan Nation Alliance’s Chief Executive Council, who have asserted the need to be involved in establishing a new Columbia River Treaty. Alongside our First Nation neighbours in the Columbia River watershed — the Secwépemc Nation and Ktunaxa Nation — we are beginning a long journey of righting the historical wrongs of the past injustices with the Crown on decision-making, revenue sharing, ecosystems and Indigenous cultural values. This is only the beginning, yet we remain confident that the principles of collaboration and partnership central to these government relations will continue to create the change we all desire for our lands and waterways.”

Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir, Tribal Chief, Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, said: “On behalf of the Secwépemc Nation, I am pleased to confirm a shared commitment resulting from the continued negotiations concerning the ongoing environmental and cultural impacts from the Columbia River Treaty. The negotiations thus far resulted in Interim Revenue Sharing Agreements between the Secwépemc, Syilx Okanagan and Ktunaxa Nations and the Province of British Columbia. These agreements represent the first time that the three Indigenous Nations within British Columbia are receiving benefits from the Columbia River Treaty dams. The dams

have caused devastation to our lands and resources, and continue to impact our title and rights. We share a commitment to reconciliation while upholding the foundation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We look forward to our continued engagement, shared decision-making and co-operation as we move forward together in a way that we can all be proud of.”

The treaty was ratified in 1964 by the U.S. and Canada to provide flood control and generate additional hydro power, but was negotiated without considering the impacts it would have on the rights, culture, economies and ways of life of the Indigenous Nations. For decades, the Ktunaxa, Secwepemc and Syilx Okanagan Nations and their members have been severely affected by the construction of treaty dams and reservoirs, changes to river flows, ecosystem and cultural losses, and the related impacts to their economies. Negotiations will continue with the Secwépemc, Syilx Okanagan and Ktunaxa Nations for a long-term agreement to help address environmental, cultural and economic impacts caused by the operations of the Columbia River Treaty.

“When the Columbia River Treaty was developed, governments didn’t consult or co-operate with First Nations or any Columbia Basin residents – the very people whose lives, livelihoods and cultures would be affected for decades,” said Katrine Conroy, Minister of Finance and Minister Responsible for the Columbia River Treaty. “Since 2018, Indigenous Nations with territory in the Columbia Basin have worked closely with Canada and B.C. to negotiate a modernized treaty with the U.S.; today, they are at last sharing in the benefits the treaty brings.”

Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, said: “The announcement today reflects our government’s action toward building relationships with First Nations that recognize, respect and support their right to self-determination. These agreements ensure Nations benefit from Columbia River Treaty revenues and support a new way of seeking First Nations’ free, prior and informed consent on a modernized Columbia River Treaty.”

Since 2018, Canada and the United States have been engaged in negotiations to modernize the treaty. The Ktunaxa, Secwépemc and Syilx Okanagan Nations have been an essential part of the Canadian negotiating team, alongside the governments of Canada and B.C.

The Nations have also led efforts to enhance ecosystem function and investigate the feasibility of restoring salmon to the B.C. portion of the Columbia Basin through the treaty-modernization negotiations.

Quick Facts:

- The Columbia River Treaty is a trans-boundary water management agreement between Canada and the United States, ratified in 1964, that vastly reduces the risk of floods and provides clean energy to millions of households in British Columbia and the United States.
- Revenue from the treaty goes to the Provincial Consolidated Revenue Fund and has contributed to funding of government functions, such as health care, education and infrastructure.
- The treaty dams and reservoirs flooded 110,000 hectares (270,000 acres) of Canadian ecosystems, displaced more than 2,000 residents, as well as First Nations, communities and infrastructure, and affected farms, tourism and forestry activities.

- Since May 2018, negotiators for Canada (including B.C.) and the United States have been meeting to discuss what a modernized version of the Columbia River Treaty could look like.
- During that time, representatives of the Ktunaxa, Secwépemc and Syilx Okanagan Nations have worked hand in hand with the governments of Canada and B.C. to develop and refine negotiating positions, strategies and proposals.

Learn More:

To learn more about the Columbia River Treaty, visit:

<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/columbiarivertreaty/>

To keep up with the latest Columbia River Treaty news, sign up for the newsletter

at: <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/columbiarivertreaty/sign-up/>

or follow the CRT on Facebook (@ColumbiaRiverTreaty) or Twitter (@CRTreaty).

To share views on the treaty, email: columbiarivertreaty@gov.bc.ca

or write to:

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