

Joint Statement: B.C.'s Declaration Act Provides a Backstop of Certainty in a World of Chaos

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Calls to amend the Declaration Act or appeal recent court decisions would undermine economic certainty, reconciliation, and shared prosperity in British Columbia.

At a time of global instability and uncertainty, people are understandably looking for clarity, certainty, and leadership grounded in shared values. Difficult moments can bring out the best in us—or they can provoke fear-based reactions that risk undoing hard-won progress. Recent trends in British Columbia are cause for concern.

Despite recent court decisions that reaffirm the crucial need to consult and negotiate, a negative narrative has begun to take hold. This narrative wrongly blames First Nations for uncertainty while ignoring the historical reality that British Columbia was largely settled without treaties. It replaces facts and experience with fear, and cooperation with division.

If allowed to shape public discourse or government decision-making, this narrative risks pulling our province backward—toward a time marked by blame, conflict, increased litigation, and even real threats of violence against Indigenous peoples. That is not a future any of us should accept.

Recent calls to amend the Declaration Act or appeal court rulings are rooted in this fear-based response. They suggest that the framework we have built together is the problem, when in fact it has been part of the solution. These actions would not create certainty—they would slow progress, increase litigation, and grind projects to a halt as First Nations are once again forced to defend our rights and interests through the courts.

British Columbia is facing real economic challenges, and First Nations are essential partners in addressing them. Our Nations are drivers of the provincial economy, supporting local communities and helping to close economic gaps through responsible projects and developments in our territories. These projects depend on the certainty provided by the Declaration Act, which offers a clear, principled pathway for First Nations, governments, and industry to work together—advancing reconciliation while enabling timely and sustainable development.

The Declaration Act was developed collaboratively with Indigenous peoples and passed unanimously by all parties in the Legislature, with the support of industry, business, and labour. It establishes minimum standards of survival and dignity for Indigenous peoples and has contributed to greater trust, stability, and economic certainty across the province. It is landmark legislation—and one British Columbia should be proud of.

British Columbia faces a clear choice about the path we walk together: a path of negotiation, collaboration, and shared prosperity with First Nations and all British Columbians, or a path that takes us backward to a place of uncertainty and conflict that none of us want to revisit.

The Declaration Act—and decisions like *Gitxaala v. British Columbia (Chief Gold Commissioner)*—are not obstacles. They are opportunities. They provide a framework to do the necessary work of reconciliation in a way that builds clarity, stability, and shared success.

We call on leaders and British Columbians alike to pause, reflect, and recognize the steady progress that has been made under the Declaration Act—and the healthier, more respectful relationships that have emerged because of it.

We call on Premier Eby to uphold the Declaration Act, resist calls to amend it or pursue appeals, and to sit down with Indigenous leadership to continue the work of building certainty, trust, and economic prosperity for everyone in British Columbia.

This is an updated version of the joint statement released December 22nd, 2025 and will continue to be updated as signatories are added

Endorsed by:

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B.C. Assembly of First Nations

Bridge River Indian Band (Xwisten)

Cayoose Creek Band (Sekw'el'was)

Cheam First Nation

Cheslatta Carrier First Nation

Ch'iyaqtel (Tzeachten First Nation)

Cowichan Tribes

Ditidaht First Nation

Dzawada'enuxw First Nation

Esk'etemc

First Nations Education Steering Committee

First Nations Emergency Services Society

First Nations Energy and Mining Council

First Nations Fisheries Council

First Nations Forestry Council

First Nations Summit

Fort Nelson First Nation

Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs

Gitxaala Nation

Haida Nation

Haíɫzaqv (Heiltsuk Nation)

High Bar First Nation

Homalco First Nation

Indigenous Tourism B.C.

Kanaka Bar Indian Band

Ktunaxa Nation Council

Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis First Nation

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Lyackson First Nation

Mamalilikulla First Nation

Maiyoo Keyoh

McLeod Lake Indian Band

Mowachaht-Muchalaht First Nation

Nadleh Whut'en

Nak'azdli Whut'en

Northern Secwepemc te Qelmucw (NSTQ)

Nuxalk Nation

Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

Okanagan Indian Band

Osoyoos Indian Band

Pacheedaht

Saulteau First Nations

SC'IA'NEW First Nation

shíshálh Nation

Shxw'ōwhámèl First Nation

Siska Indian Band

Skawahlook First Nation

Skeechestn Indian Band

Skuppah Indian Band

SnPink'tn (The Penticton Indian Band)

Spuzzum First Nation

Splatsin First Nation

Squiala

St'at'imc Chiefs Council

Syilx Okanagan Nation
Tahltan Central Government

Tkemlúps te Secwépemc

Tl'azt'en Nation

Tl'esqox

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Tsartlip First Nation

Tsay Keh Dene Nation

Tseshah First Nation

Tsideldel First Nation

Ts'kw'aylaxw

Tsilhqot'in National Government

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Westbank First Nation

West Moberly First Nations

Wet'suwet'en First Nation

Williams Lake First Nation

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Yale First Nation

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