
NEWS RELEASE

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Tsawwassen First Nation
Office of the Premier
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

FIRST URBAN TREATY IN B.C. HISTORY TAKES EFFECT TODAY

TSAWWASSEN – The first urban treaty in the history of British Columbia and the first modern treaty negotiated under the British Columbia Treaty Commission process – the Tsawwassen First Nation treaty – took effect at 12:01 a.m. today, announced Tsawwassen First Nation Chief Kim Baird, Premier Gordon Campbell, and the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister for Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians.

“Today, the Indian Act no longer exists in our community,” said Chief Baird. “Today, we have taken a huge leap forward in our journey of rebuilding our community to overcome the negative consequences of our past. We now are taking back our rightful place as a self-governing First Nation and will soon pass our first laws governing our new lands, resources, and funds.”

“I want to congratulate Chief Baird for her hard work and dedication and all the Tsawwassen people as they take this momentous next step in the long and proud history of their nation,” said Premier Campbell. “I feel a profound sense of respect, hope and anticipation that this is an achievement that will be repeated often in British Columbia. Treaties provide certainty regarding Aboriginal rights and title to First Nations and other citizens of B.C. and Canada.”

“This is a historic day for British Columbia, for Canada and most of all for the Tsawwassen people,” said Minister Strahl. “Today Tsawwassen First Nation begins an era of renewed vitality and opportunity. This is also a celebration of our reconciliation and our shared opportunity to showcase what can be accomplished when we put aside our differences and build on shared interests.”

The treaty provides Tsawwassen First Nation with payments, settlements and other funds to help build Tsawwassen’s future. These include a capital transfer and other one-time cash payments of \$33.6 million and self-government funding of \$2.9 million annually over the first five years of the treaty. The land component includes approximately 724 hectares, of which 434 hectares are provincial Crown land and 290 hectares are former Indian reserve.

The Tsawwassen treaty will operate within the framework of the Constitution of Canada. Within that framework, Tsawwassen First Nation has the constitutional authority to make laws in many areas of jurisdiction that are traditionally federal, provincial and municipal in nature. The laws Tsawwassen First Nation is passing today are a comprehensive suite of legislation that provide an immediate basis for the substantive exercise of self-government authority.

These powers include matters related to the preservation of its culture, the management of land, the exercise of its treaty rights, and the operation of its government. With the exception of determining Indian status, the Indian Act no longer applies to Tsawwassen members. In addition, Tsawwassen members who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada will continue to be entitled to all the rights and benefits of other Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

The treaty and related agreements present Tsawwassen First Nation with modern governance tools, coupled with funds, to generate increased economic vitality. It makes Tsawwassen First Nation an equal partner in government-to-government relationships with Canada and British Columbia, and provides for strong and workable interactions with these partners. It also confers rights, benefits and obligations regarding self-government, land and other resources throughout its traditional territory, covering approximately 279,600 hectares. Tsawwassen First Nation also becomes a member of Metro Vancouver and TransLink.

For more information about the Tsawwassen First Nation and treaties in B.C and Canada, please visit these websites:

<http://www.tsawwassenfirstnation.com>

<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca>

<http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr>

Contact: Tanya Corbet
Media Liaison
Tsawwassen First Nation
604 928-0879 (cell)

Bridgitte Anderson
Press Secretary
Office of the Premier
604 307-7177

Media Relations
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
819 953-1160

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

Maria Wilkie
Director of Communications
Ministry of Aboriginal Relations
and Reconciliation
250 361-7720 (cell)

Nina Chiarelli
Press Secretary
Office of the
Honourable Chuck Strahl
819 997-0002

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