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**NISGA'A LISIMS GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA SIGN AGREEMENT,
SETTLE DISAGREEMENTS ON INTERPRETATION OF NISGA'A TREATY**

Gitlaxt'aamiks and Victoria, British Columbia – Today, the Nisga'a Lisims Government (NLG) and the Government of British Columbia (the Province) reached a settlement agreement that confirms a shared interpretation of important provisions of the Nisga'a Final Agreement (the Nisga'a Treaty). This agreement, signed by Eva Clayton, President of the Nisga'a Nation and Hon. Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, is a historic out-of-court settlement that successfully implements a government-to-government and respectful approach to resolving treaty disputes.

NLG commenced dispute resolution proceedings under this Nisga'a Treaty process in 2019. The Province and NLG worked together collaboratively, without the need for external facilitation, to come to a common agreement that successfully resolved the issues raised by NLG. This success is a testament to the commitment of the Nisga'a Nation and the Province to ensure that the Nisga'a Treaty continues to succeed.

"In a treaty relationship like the one we have, it is inevitable that disagreements will come up from time to time," said President Eva Clayton. "We are pleased and encouraged that we have been able to work with the Province to find mutually beneficial solutions to these disputes to ensure Nisga'a citizens' treaty rights are respected. The Nisga'a Nation looks forward to working with the Province to implement our treaty as we have agreed."

The settlement agreement features three main areas where the Province and NLG confirm their understanding regarding the interpretation and application of the Nisga'a Treaty.

First, it confirms how the Province will respectfully engage, including consulting with and accommodating the Nisga'a Nation should the Province enter into reconciliation or accommodation measures with other Indigenous groups that claim Aboriginal rights and title within Nisga'a Treaty

areas. It does so by setting out a clear process and commitments intended to ensure that the Nisga'a Treaty is respected and properly implemented.

Second, the agreement provides clarity on how Chapter 10 – *Environmental Assessment and Protection* of the Nisga'a Treaty will apply to projects that may affect Nisga'a treaty rights.

Specifically, the agreement confirms how *all* projects will be assessed under the Nisga'a Treaty, as originally intended, and a protocol that will be jointly developed by the parties. The assessments of all projects will focus on ensuring the projects do not impact Nisga'a treaty rights.

Finally, the agreement clarifies how certain harvest limits to grizzly bear, moose, and mountain goat will be applied. The Nisga'a Nation sought these limits under the Treaty to ensure that there was a sustainable and conservative harvest of these important species within Nisga'a traditional territory and to ensure Nisga'a citizens received a set portion of the harvest. NLG and the Province have agreed on how this treaty right is to be respected to meet conservation targets and ensure Nisga'a harvesting rights are respected.

The agreement ensures that the objectives of these harvest limits are met by confirming that these limits are intended to apply to all harvesters within the Nass Wildlife Area, as opposed to just Nisga'a harvesters.

“Our commitment to Nisga'a citizens is to always ensure their rights under the Treaty are upheld to the highest levels and that the Treaty continues to serve our Nation,” said Eva Clayton, President, Nisga'a Lisims Government. “We are pleased that the Treaty, a ground-breaking and forward-thinking document, endures the test of time as a guide to how we and our Treaty partners work together.”

“As treaty partners, the Province and the Nisga'a Nation are working together to evolve our relationship so we can help support strong, healthy, communities,” said Hon. Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. “This agreement provides greater clarity to both governments on how certain chapters in the Nisga'a Treaty will be interpreted and on B.C.'s consultation obligations, including our approach to working with neighbouring First Nations when there may be an impact on the Nisga'a treaty. We are committed to fulfilling those and continuing to strengthen our treaty relationship.”

The Nisga'a Treaty, which came into effect on May 11, 2000, is the first modern treaty in British Columbia. May 11, 2024, will mark the 24th anniversary of the Nisga'a Treaty. The parties to the Nisga'a Treaty are the Nisga'a Nation, the Province and the Government of Canada. The Nisga'a Treaty sets out the rights and interests of the Nisga'a Nation and its citizens, and the responsibilities of the Nisga'a Nation and its treaty partners. The Nisga'a Treaty includes a process for resolving differences between the parties over the interpretation and application of the treaty. This treaty

process allows the parties to address conflicts in a collaborative and respectful fashion, outside of the courtroom.

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