



Nisga'a Lisims Government

T 250 633 3000 / F 250 633 2367

TF 1 866 633 0888

PO Box 231 / 2000 Lisims Dr

New Aiyansh BC / Canada V0J 1A0

NISGAANATION.CA

May 11, 2023

COMMUNIQUE TO NISGA'A CITIZENS
Nisga'a Day 2023
A Reflection of Treaty Implementation and our Path Forward

Greetings to Citizens of the Nisga'a Nation.

I would first like to start by extending my heartfelt condolences to those that have lost loved ones recently. I also offer prayers for strength and comfort to those battling cancer and other illnesses, and to those battling addictions and facing homelessness.

Today we celebrate the 23rd anniversary of the Effective Date of the Nisga'a Final Agreement. Twenty-three years of being a self-governing modern treaty nation in British Columbia.

As we can all attest to, being the first modern treaty nation in BC has not come without its challenges. But we have also celebrated many successes.

I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on some more recent successes we have realized as we work to advance the quality of life for the Nisga'a Nation.

Government-to-Government Relations:

The Nisga'a Treaty is a tripartite agreement between the Nisga'a Nation and the Governments of British Columbia and Canada.

Over 23 years we have faced challenges with our treaty partners and how they define our relationship. After over a century of pursuing a just and honourable settlement, many have characterized our commitment to the Treaty as a 'marriage' with our treaty partners, while they have perceivably viewed it as a 'divorce' – that is once we signed on the dotted line, there ended the relationship.

As a tripartite agreement, we have continued to remind both the federal and provincial governments that our treaty is a lasting and living document with obligations from all sides.

We have made significant progress both federally and provincially at improving our government-to-government-to-government relations.

Land Claims Agreements Coalition:

In 2003, former President (late) Nelson Leeson and his fellow leaders of the day joined other modern treaty nations from across Canada to form the Land Claims Agreements Coalition (“LCAC”). This year we celebrated 20 years of the Coalition’s formation.

From the time of formation, the primary mandate of the LCAC was to collectively lobby the federal government to adopt a federal [Modern Treaty Implementation Policy](#) that would recognize a whole-of-government approach to modern treaty implementation. That is, our relationship with the federal government is not just with Crown-Indigenous Relations, it is with every other department that has an obligation identified in our Treaty.

In February of this year, I joined Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Minister Marc Miller and my colleague Aluki Kotierc of Nunavut Tungavik Incorporated to announce that the federal government had indeed adopted that very policy. It took 20 gruelling years, and it took a collective and collaborative effort of Canada’s 26 modern treaty nations working together to accomplish this monumental achievement.

As a result of this, we have also been successful in having the federal government work with us and other modern treaty nations and self-governing indigenous groups through a Collaborative Fiscal Policy process to identify funding based on actual need within our communities in the areas of housing and infrastructure, lands and resources, language and culture, fiscal relations and governance.

The work is on going and being tackled one boulder at a time, but you will see the results of it in the area of housing in our communities with new construction taking place. We look forward to our Language and Culture Centre construction in Laxgalts’ap and the windows of opportunity this will create in keeping our Nisga’a Language and Culture alive and thriving.

In April 2023, Wilp Si’ayuukhl Nisga’a consented to amendments to the Nisga’a Treaty to restore the section 87 Indian Act tax exemption for Nisga’a citizens to use on reserves of other First Nations (subject to that First Nation’s taxes). The amendments also restore the exemption on Nisga’a former reserves, subject to any taxes imposed by the Nisga’a Nation itself. The government of British Columbia has granted consent on May 9, 2023 and we anticipated Canada will consent to the treaty amendments in the near future. The treaty amendments are scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2024.

As a result of these amendments to the Nisga’a Treaty, the elected leaders of the Nisga’a Nation have important decisions to make as to how taxation works on Nisga’a Lands.

Our Path Forward:

While there is much progressing, there is a lot more in store for us in the near and far future. We have a lot to look forward to and celebrate.

In July, we will commemorate the 25th anniversary of when negotiations ended for the Nisga’a Final Agreement. At that time, the three parties to the treaty then went to each of their respective constituents for ratification of the treaty.

In July, we will welcome our friends from the Tlicho Government and Gwitchin Tribal Council of the Northwest Territories who will be observing our government in action. We will also take the time to share our rich cultural histories together.

In September, we will celebrate along with Sim'oogit Ni'isjoohl and his family the repatriation of the Ni'isjoohl memorial pole from Scotland that will be housed in our very own Nisga'a Museum in Laxgalts'ap.

In May of 2024, we will gather in our biennial Special Assembly of the Nisga'a Nation in the Nisga'a Village of Gitwinksihlkw. We look forward to the opportunity to sit and share in dialogue with the many areas of importance that we need your guidance and direction on.

On this 23rd anniversary of the Effective Date of the Nisga'a Final Agreement, I wish each and every Nisga'a citizen a HAPPY NISGA'A DAY!

May we always be mindful of our vision:

In the spirit of Sayt-K'il'im-Goot, the Nisga'a Nation is a place where:

- our Ayuuk, language, and culture are the foundation of our identity
- learning is a way of life
- we strive for sustainable prosperity and self-reliance
- we inspire trust and understanding through effective communication, and
- our governance and services evolve to meet our people's needs.

Please continue to take care of one another.

In the Spirit of Sayt-K'il'im-Goot
NISGA'A LISIMS GOVERNMENT



Eva Clayon, President
Noxs Wil Luu-gaamiks Hloks