



Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

AHOUSAHT
DITIDAHT
ʔIIHATIS / CIINAXINT
HESQUIAHT
HUPACASATH

HUU-AY-AHT
KA:'YU:'K'T'H'/CHE:K:TLES7ET'H'
MOWACHAHT/MUCHALAHT
NUCHATLAHT
TLA-O-QUI-AHT

TOQUAHT
TSESHAHT
UCHUCKLESAHT
YUUŁ.UʔİŁ.ʔATH

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MEDIA RELEASE

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NUU-CHAH-NULTH TRIBAL COUNCIL CELEBRATES THE AHOUSAHT ET AL DECISION FROM THE BC COURT OF APPEAL

(Port Alberni, BC): After waiting 26 long months for a decision from the BC Court of Appeal in the *Ahousaht et al* case, the court has unanimously ruled that the Federal Government has been infringing on the five Nuuchahnulth Nations' right to a commercial fishery. The Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council (NTC) is excited and relieved that the courts have finally confirmed this right that we know we have held since the beginning of time. The right to a commercial fishery also went to the Supreme Court of Canada in 2014, when Canada was denied leave to appeal the decision of the lower courts, and has still not been implemented.

"In this current reality of reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and the Federal Government's commitment to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, First Nations should not have to go to court twice to get their rights implemented by the Federal Government. But by so doing, we got the victory we wanted. Today we mark this day as a long-awaited decision and know our ancestors are celebrating with us," said Kekinusuqs, Judith Sayers, NTC President.

"The Court of Appeal clearly stated that the Justice at the BC Supreme Court could not impose new limits on this right and that the commercial right to a fishery was a priority to other fisheries," she added.

The commercial fishermen of the Five Nations represented in the *Ahousaht et al* case have long been waiting to get back onto the waters to fully exercise their right to a commercial fishery. For many years, they have been limited to a very small fishery and this has not been acceptable as fishing is a way of life for them. Now, the Court of Appeal has agreed with them, and we are urging Fisheries and Oceans Canada to act immediately in implementing the court ruling.

"Today is a day to celebrate," said Mariah Charleson, NTC Vice-President. "I am discouraged that Canada went to this length to deny their infringement of our inherent rights, but today we celebrate. Today's decision lets the entire world know what we as Nuuchahnulth-aht have known for a very long time; that our rights have been, and continue to be, infringed upon by Canada. With this acknowledgement, we can begin to work together and move forward in a good way," she added.

The NTC would like to extend its gratitude to those First Nations and organizations that have supported Nuuchahnulth Nations through these two court cases and voiced their support.

About Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council

The Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council (NTC) provides programs and services to over 10,000 registered members. The role of the NTC is to represent 14 First Nations in three regions stretching 300 kilometers of the Pacific Coast of Vancouver Island from Brooks Peninsula in the north to Point-no-Point in the south. The NTC represents Ahousaht, Ditidaht, Ehattesaht/Chinehkint, Hesquiaht, Hupacasath, Huu-ay- aht, Kyuquot/Checklesah, Mowachaht /Muchalaht, Nuchatlaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Toquaht, Tseshah, Uchucklesah and Ucluelet First Nations and provides a variety of programs and services to them. For more information, please visit www.nuuchahnulth.org.

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