



Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

AHOUSAHT
DITIDAHT
ʔIIHATIS / ČIINAXINT
HESQUIAHT
HUPACASATH

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

TOQUAHT
TSESHAHT
UCHUCKLESAHT
YUUʔ.UʔIʔATH

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Nuu-chah-nulth Statement on access to the ʔahuuʔi

June 9, 2020

Port Alberni, BC – The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council met with our Board of Directors on June 9th, 2020 regarding access to Nuu-chah-nulth ʔahuuʔi (territories). Directors were very clear, the health, safety, and well-being of our people come as a priority, before economics. Mariah Charleson, Vice President of the Tribal Council stated: “As Nuu-chah-nulth, we must take extraordinary measures, that go far above and beyond Provincial and Federal Health guidelines, to protect our communities and members from this devastating disease-COVID-19.”

President Judith Sayers elaborated further and says “Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council strongly opposes the opening of the Canada border for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic and until Nuu-chah-nulth leaders advise otherwise. The risk is simply too high and we are not willing to put the health of our members to the side simply to benefit the economy. The health and well-being of all Nuu-chah-nulth-aht will continue to be the priority as BC begins to Re-Open.”

The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council Board of Directors unanimously passed the following Motion on June 9, 2020 regarding access to Nuu-chah-nulth ʔahuuʔi and has the complete support of Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council:

Whereas the Province of British Columbia and the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations have recognized and declared ongoing states of emergency due to the Covid-19 pandemic;

Whereas the provincial, federal and Nuu-chah-nulth governments have each recognized that indigenous people and communities are particularly vulnerable to the transmission and effects of the Covid-19 virus;

Whereas Article 24.2 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states: “Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right;”

Whereas the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations have each implemented extensive measures to protect our elders and our communities, despite economic cost to our communities;

Whereas provincial public health officials have warned that the importation of the virus to Vancouver Island communities, including to remote and indigenous communities, is a continuing and prominent risk;

Whereas the re-opening of the ʔahuuʔi of the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations must be contingent upon the free prior and informed consent of the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the British Columbia Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act;

Therefore be it resolved that:

1. The Nuu-chah-nulth Nations affirm that the protection of the health of the Nations’ members and citizens is of the highest priority, and must be assured before recreational and non-essential economic activities are expanded in our Nations’ ʔahuuʔi, including but not limited to, the opening of: Provincial Parks, Federal Parks, and other activity that attracts non-residents into Nuu-chah-nulth ʔahuuʔi.

2. Access to the *Hahuuti* of the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations shall remain restricted to *Hahuuti* residents and essential service providers until:
 - a. Testing of *Hahuuti* residents is confirmed to be readily and consistently available in accordance with current provincial health guidelines, including the guideline that residents of remote and indigenous communities should be prioritized for testing;
 - b. Screening of non-residents seeking to enter the *Hahuuti* is established to ensure individuals are not currently symptomatic or known to be infected with the virus, and have been conducting themselves in accordance with public health orders and guidelines during the 14-day period preceding their intended trip into Nuu-chah-nulth *Hahuuti*;
 - c. Contact tracing measures are in place to ensure that *Hahuuti* residents will receive prompt notification, support, testing and care in the event of possible exposure to the Covid-19 virus;
 - d. Communications protocols are established between the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations and Vancouver Island and Provincial Health Authorities to ensure the early and prompt reporting by the Health Authorities to the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations, under appropriate confidentiality protections, of all relevant information relating to suspected and confirmed cases of Covid-19 in Vancouver Island communities, including indigenous communities;
3. The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council is hereby authorized to advise the federal and provincial governments that:
 - a. Nuu-chah-nulth consent to the re-opening of our Nations' *Hahuuti* will be contingent on each of the factors set out in this resolution being fully addressed; and
 - b. Only when each Nuu-chah-Nulth Nation determines that all conditions are fulfilled and their consent given, can the federal and provincial governments open up recreation and other non-essential economic activities within the Nuu-chah-nulth *Hahuuti*.

Moved by Chief Robert Dennis, seconded by Director Archie Little

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About Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

The Nuu-chah-nulth 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/Checklesaht, Mowachaht /Muchalaht, Nuchatlaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Toquaht, Tseshah, Uchucklesaht and Ucluelet First Nations and provides a variety of programs and services to them.

For more information, please visit www.nuuchahnulth.org.