

RELATIONSHIP PROTOCOL  
between  
FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL  
and  
THE PACIFIC INSTITUTE  
FOR CLIMATE SOLUTIONS





**Pacific Institute  
for Climate Solutions**

## RELATIONSHIP PROTOCOL

Between

**BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS, FIRST NATIONS  
SUMMIT, UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS**

Collectively referred to as the **FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**  
and

**THE PACIFIC INSTITUTE FOR CLIMATE SOLUTIONS**

### WHEREAS:

1. The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN), First Nations Summit (FNS), and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC). The FNLC is not an independent political entity or organization, but is a collaborative political working partnership among the three organizations, with the aim of advancing the interests of Nations in British Columbia. The mandate and work of the FNLC is collectively directed by Nations' governments through resolutions of the three political organizations. The FNLC is directed by mandates from First Nations through resolutions, to politically represent the interests of First Nations in British Columbia and develop strategies and actions to empower First Nations to bring about significant and substantive changes to government policy that will benefit all First Nations in British Columbia.
2. The FNLC is not an Aboriginal title and rights or treaty rights holder and cannot engage in a process to establish and provide free, prior and informed consent on behalf of individual Indigenous peoples.
3. The Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) is a collaborative and user-engaged institute that networks and convenes diverse research partners to catalyze climate solutions for British Columbia, Canada, and the world. PICS is hosted and led by the University of Victoria, in collaboration with University of British Columbia, University of Northern British Columbia, and Simon Fraser University. PICS is committed to collaborative research and change-making that benefits scholars, communities, and decision-makers. PICS is approaching the future with a lens on justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion and values diverse ways of knowing, especially the knowledges of First Nation Elders, Knowledge Keepers, youth, and leaders.
4. The Parties recognize that the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) – working in collaboration with First Nations in BC – developed the B.C. First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan and the Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction by First Nations in B.C. (2023-2030) that articulate the shared vision and goals for First Nation-led climate solutions and resilience within the province.
5. The Parties believe that fostering enhanced, respectful cooperation and communication is essential for advancing climate solutions that recognize and uphold First Nations inherent title, rights and Treaty rights and directly contribute to the self-determination and well-being of First Nations communities in BC.

### PURPOSE:

6. To establish a collaborative, constructive, and voluntary working relationship, through a joint dialogue process that focuses on climate solutions that uphold First Nations title and rights in British Columbia.

7. To advance First Nations climate leadership and priorities – that safeguard the integrity of the land and environment – and generate benefits for First Nations in British Columbia.

#### **PRINCIPLES:**

8. The agreement is guided by the spirit of cooperation, respect, partnership, and the understanding, recognition and application of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This intention is further fortified by the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act legislation of British Columbia, which aims to create a path forward that respects and recognizes the human rights of Indigenous peoples while introducing better transparency and predictability in the work we do together.
9. The Parties recognize First Nations spiritual, social, cultural, and economic practices associated with the land, which respect environmental and natural resources that generate health, resilience, and prosperity for current and future generations.
10. The Parties acknowledge the historical and present-day impacts of academic institutions on First Nations, which necessitate the dismantling of persistent colonial systems and barriers, and renewed approaches that honor and support First Nation knowledges and decision-making.
11. The Parties will work collaboratively to share their respective knowledge, expertise, and experience to serve First Nations in BC with a focus on promoting climate action and resilience-building priorities and interests.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

12. The Parties will explore options to increase support for collaborative research and initiatives that contribute to and help implement both the BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan and the Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction by First Nations in BC.
13. The Parties will work cooperatively to identify opportunities for knowledge sharing and mobilization that highlight First Nations knowledges (e.g. traditional ecological knowledge, sciences, scholarly ways of knowing, etc.) and overall climate leadership within B.C.
14. The Parties will work collaboratively to explore ways to offer rights-based and culturally appropriate opportunities to engage in research and education that supports First Nations climate action.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

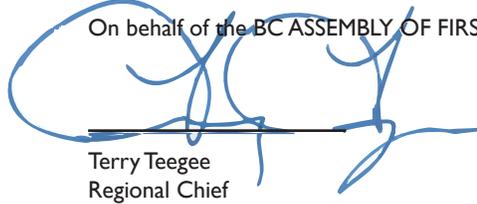
15. The Parties agree to meet at least once annually to build and review joint work and communication plans, including measurable outcomes for the upcoming year.
16. The Parties agree to an annual review of progress on relationship commitments.
17. The Parties agree to provide advance notice, whenever possible, on actions and communications that may significantly impact the objectives of this protocol.

#### **TERM AND REVIEW:**

18. This Relationship Protocol shall be effective upon signing by both Parties for a term of four (4) years. It will be subject to renewal by written notice to ensure the relevance and renewal of commitment to the objectives. The FNLC or PICS may terminate it with three months' written notice.
19. The Parties understand that the words "Partners", "Partner" or "Partnership" wherever used in this Relationship Protocol are intended to emphasize the cooperative nature of the relationship. The Parties agree that they are not partners in the legal sense. The acts of one Party will not in any way bind the second Party; the Parties share no expectation of profit and no joint or several liabilities are created as a result of this "Relationship Protocol".
20. The Parties acknowledge that this Relationship Protocol does not create any enforceable legal or equitable rights or any obligation, but merely serves to document the parameters that have been set and the areas in which discussions have been held in which understandings in principles have been reached.
21. The Parties may agree in writing to amend this Protocol.
22. This Protocol does not and is not intended to, define or extinguish any Aboriginal or treaty rights.

Signed on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of January, 2025

On behalf of the BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS



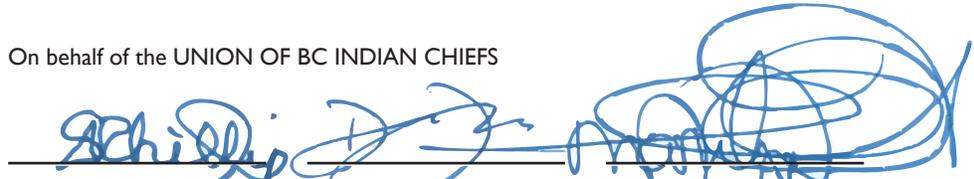
Terry Teegee  
Regional Chief

On behalf of the FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT



Nasu?kin Cheryl Casimer      Robert Phillips      Hugh Braker

On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President      Chief Don Tom, Vice President      Chief Marilyn Slett, Secretary Treasurer

On behalf of the UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA



Qwul'sih'yah'maht  
Dr. Robina Thomas,  
Vice President Indigenous      Dr. Fraser Hof  
Associate Vice President  
Research      Dr. Ian Mauro  
PICS Executive Director

Appendix A – Append the BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan and the Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction by First Nations in B.C. (2023-2030).



My name is Hetxw'ms Gyetxw (pronounced Het-whims Gyet), and I am from the Gitksan Nation. As the President and Founder of Aluu'taa, an Indigenous research institute dedicated to amplifying Indigenous perspectives in research and decision-making, I approach this artwork with a commitment to representing the interconnectedness of land, culture, and relationships.

This artwork for the Relationship Protocol symbolizes the diverse landscapes of British Columbia, reflecting the mountains, rivers, and forests that shape the lives and practices of First Nations communities. At the center, the symbol of two hands embodies reciprocity and respect, principles that guide this agreement. The circular motifs and interconnected lines highlight the cycles of the land and the shared responsibilities of all parties in protecting these natural and cultural systems.

I began this creative process with a smudge, a ceremony to cleanse and set my intentions. This helped guide the intent of my work and the path I was to take, ensuring that the design would resonate with the values of respect, reciprocity, and stewardship that this protocol seeks to uphold.

Through this design, I aimed to honour the depth of First Nations' relationships with their territories while expressing the collaborative spirit of this agreement. It is a visual affirmation of the values this protocol embodies: mutual respect, equity, and stewardship of the land for future generations.

This artwork reminds and invites us to engage in partnerships grounded in respect for Indigenous knowledge and practices. I am inspired by Gitksan storytelling traditions, where art and story intertwine to connect us to the land, each other, and the future we are shaping together.