

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

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March 12, 2020

Maude Barlow
Honorary Chairperson
Council of Canadians
200-240 Bank Street
Ottawa, ON K2P 1X4

Mark Hancock
National President
Canadian Union of Public Employees
1375 St. Laurent
Ottawa, ON, K1G 0

RE: UBCIC Resolution 2020-10 “Support for the Blue Communities Project”

Dear Chairperson Maude Barlow and National President Mark Hancock,

We are writing with respect to UBCIC Resolution 2020-10, “Support for the Blue Communities Project,” which was presented, affirmed and endorsed at the UBCIC Chiefs Council on February 26, 2020 (enclosed).

By Resolution 2020-10, the UBCIC Chiefs Council fully supports the Blue Communities Project, the David Suzuki Foundation’s Blue Dot Project, and the common waters framework it promotes to conserve water and achieve greater responsibility and accountability in regards to water services and resources.

The UBCIC Chiefs Council has directed the UBCIC Executive and staff to work with other like-minded organizations to continue fighting for clean water and proper sanitation systems for Indigenous communities, and to fully implement the core principles of the Blue Communities Project. The UBCIC Chiefs Council has also committed to fully adopting and promoting the Blue Communities Project by supporting public, sustainable water services and practices, and by continuing to pass resolutions that recognize water and sanitation as human rights that Indigenous people are entitled to without discrimination.

Please keep us updated as this work develops.

On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip
President



Chief Don Tom
Vice-President



Kukpi7 Judy Wilson
Secretary-Treasurer

CC: UBCIC Chiefs Council
David Suzuki Foundation

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UNION OF B.C. INDIAN CHIEFS CHIEFS COUNCIL

FEBRUARY 26TH-27TH, 2020

MUSQUEAM COMMUNITY CENTRE, X^wMƏӨK^wYƏM (MUSQUEAM TERRITORY)

Resolution no. 2020-10

RE: Support for the Blue Communities Project

WHEREAS water is crucial to the survival of First Nations and all actions which threaten and degrade water also threaten and degrade the spiritual, cultural, and physical health of Indigenous peoples;

WHEREAS the Blue Communities Project, initiated by the Council of Canadians and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, encourages Indigenous communities and municipalities to adopt principles that recognize that water is a shared resource and responsibility by passing resolutions that:

- 1) Recognize water and sanitation as human rights
- 2) Ban or phase out the sale of bottled water in municipal facilities and at municipal events
- 3) Promote publicly financed, owned, and operated water and wastewater service;

WHEREAS the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of BC, committed to implement, affirms:

Article 23: Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institution.

Article 25: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard;

WHEREAS there are Indigenous communities across Canada that do not have clean drinking water or access to proper sanitation systems, and must continue to fight for their welfare while their traditional territories and lands are being polluted and degraded by industrial development, urbanization, and climate change;

WHEREAS water is a precious resource that sustains all living things that is being negligently cared for by the Canadian government and corporate interests that have allowed it to be contaminated and polluted by resource extraction projects such as the Mount Polley Mine;

WHEREAS by Resolution 2001-7, the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly committed to be actively involved in working to protect water – especially in reference to Indigenous rights domestically and internationally – and endorsed the *Indigenous Declaration on Water*, which recognizes the collective responsibility of all Indigenous peoples to ensure the protection of water and its ability to sustain future generations; and

WHEREAS by Resolution 2019-36 the UBCIC Chiefs Council supported recommendations for a collaborative approach to amending the *Water Sustainability Act* that would support Indigenous laws and authority over the governance and management of fresh water in their territories.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council fully supports the Blue Communities Project, the David Suzuki Foundation’s Blue Dot Project, and the common waters framework it promotes to conserve water and achieve greater responsibility and accountability in regards to water services and resources;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council directs the UBCIC Executive and staff to work with other like-minded organizations to continue fighting for clean water and proper sanitation systems for Indigenous communities, and to fully implement the core principles of the Blue Communities Project, including ending the privatization of water services and banning the sale of bottled water at public events and meetings and making water available for free and in reusable containers; and

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council commits to fully adopting and promoting the Blue Communities Project by supporting public, sustainable water services and practices, and by continuing to pass resolutions that recognize water and sanitation as human rights that Indigenous people are entitled to without discrimination.

Moved: Chief Byron Louis, Okanagan Indian Band
Seconded: Chief Ed Hall, Kwikwetlem First Nation
Disposition: Carried
Date: February 26, 2020