
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
In-SHUCK-ch Nation

PROVINCE APPROVES SEVENTH AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MISSION – The Province and the In-SHUCK-ch Nation have signed an Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) that will lay the foundation for a future treaty in the Lillooet River Valley, announced Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Minister Michael de Jong today.

“There is always a great sense of accomplishment when negotiations reach this stage and I applaud all the parties for achieving this milestone,” said de Jong. “This agreement will benefit the In-SHUCK-ch Nation by developing stronger relationships with local government, greater involvement in regional economic development and more control over managing their communities.”

The In-SHUCK-ch Nation represents 907 members from the Douglas First Nation, Samahquam Nation and Skatin First Nations. In-SHUCK-ch has been negotiating an AIP with the Province and the Government of Canada since April 2002. The agreement sets the foundation for negotiating a final agreement with provisions on land, capital transfer, resources, culture and governance. The AIP provides for a treaty land offer of 14,577 hectares and a cash offer of \$21 million, which will assist with developing business capacity and economic opportunities in the region.

“The Douglas First Nation is just launching a run-of-river power project with our partner Cloudworks. This was done under existing provincial policy. The treaty should allow us greater opportunities for supplying green power,” said Chief Darryl Peters of the Douglas First Nation in agreement that a treaty would provide greater economic opportunities.

“The treaty should allow us to begin to deal with our own problems. Isolation, poor roads, no connection to the BC Hydro grid, and no landline telephones means that we can’t compete in the marketplace. With no markets, you can’t build a sustainable economy,” said Chief Keith Smith of Samahquam Nation.

“Forestry will kick-start our economic engine. Independent power production should help it gather momentum, and the service industry should keep it humming. We look forward to taking responsibility for ourselves, and not having to wait for other governments,” said Chief Patrick Williams of Skatin First Nations.

In a general assembly last April, In-SHUCK-ch Nation community members approved the AIP. All parties have expressed the desire to move quickly towards a final agreement. Since 2003, British Columbia has signed six AIPs; final agreement negotiations are currently underway with Yekooche, Yale, Lheidli T’enneh, Maa-nulth, Sliammon and Tsawwassen First Nations.

The Province is building a New Relationship with First Nations founded on the principles of mutual respect, recognition and reconciliation of Aboriginal rights and title. The goal is to materially improve the lives of Aboriginal people and ensure they share in the economic and social development of British Columbia.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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