



BCMF Hosts Coastal Conference Despite Opposition and Looks Forward to Improved Relations with Local First Nations

MEDIA RELEASE

Vancouver, British Columbia, January 20, 2023 — With more than 100 participating, the BC Métis Federation (BCMF) is proudly hosting its [2024 Coastal Conference](#) in North Vancouver today, despite efforts by some First Nations opposed to the event.

The 2024 Coastal Conference is a gathering committed to promoting environmental awareness, and to advancing initiatives aimed at safeguarding BC's coastal ecosystems. Delegates, both Métis and non-Métis, participate in a series of engaging sessions led by speakers who are passionate advocates for the vital importance of safeguarding BC's shorelines.

This morning, at the outset of the conference, local First Nation leadership arrived at the event to express their opposition to it being held in their territory. Chief Wayne Sparrow of the Musqueam Indian Band, Khelsilem, Chairperson of the Squamish Nation, and Chief Jen Thomas of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation were then invited into the event to discuss their concerns.

The dialogue that followed was respectful, with the First Nations leaders and BCMF agreeing to meet in the future to work together to improve their working relationship with the hope of avoiding future misunderstandings. After that conversation, the 2024 Coastal Conference proceeded as planned.

“While it was disappointing to see opposition to the 2024 Coastal Conference, we are hopeful that the conversation at the event today was a first step towards greater understanding,” said Keith Henry, BCMF President. “We look forward to meeting with Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh to work to strengthen our relationship.”

Three days before the conference, BCMF received [a letter from the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh leaders](#) requesting that the event be cancelled. BCMF responded with [a letter clarifying the purpose of the event](#) which explained that BCMF was in no way making any territorial claims. In the letter, BCMF also restated its desire and willingness to meet with the local First Nations leadership. No response to that letter was received.

Li taan paasii. Li taan ki vyayn.

From our past. For our future.



The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) also expressed opposition to the event, posting [a news release on the BC Assembly of First Nations website](#) on January 19, 2024 which encouraged delegates to boycott the event. This is another unfortunate example of recent racist, anti-Métis sentiment by some First Nations leadership and individuals across the country. BCMF is steadfast in its commitment to standing up for its members, providing a voice for Métis in British Columbia.

– 30 –

ABOUT BCMF

The BC Métis Federation (BCMF) is a non-profit association that works with Métis communities to ensure the well being of BCMF members. Through grassroots efforts, BCMF advocates on behalf of its many members, living all across the province.

MEDIA CONTACT

Keith Henry, President, BC Métis Federation

P: (778) 388-5013

E: K.Henry@BCMetis.com

IMPORTANT LINKS

- [Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh letter to BCMF \(PDF\)](#) - January 17, 2024
- [BCMF letter to Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh \(PDF\)](#) - January 18, 2024
- [First Nations Leadership Council news release](#) - January 19, 2024
- [2024 Coastal Conference agenda \(PDF\)](#)
- [Coastal Water Protectors website](#)

Li taan paasii. Li taan ki vyayn.

From our past. For our future.