

DRAFT RESOLUTION # 00 / 2017

AFN Annual General Assembly, July 25-27, 2017, Regina, Saskatchewan

TITLE:	Support for BC First Nations Affected by Wildfire Crisis
SUBJECT:	Emergency Management
MOVED BY:	Chief, Joe Alphonse, Tl'etinqox First Nation, British Columbia
SECONDED BY:	Proxy, Jeanette Jules, Tk'emlups te Secwepemc, British Columbia

WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) states:
- i. Article 7: Indigenous individuals have the rights to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty, and security of person;
 - ii. Article 10: Indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories. No relocation shall take place without the free, prior, and informed consent of the Indigenous peoples concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, with the option of return;
 - iii. Article 20 (2): Indigenous peoples deprived of their means of subsistence and development are entitled to just and fair redress;
 - iv. Article 21 (1): Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health, and social security.
 - v. 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 institutions.
 - vi. Article 29: Indigenous people have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for Indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination;
- B. The forests of our lands and territories have been at the environmental, economic, social and cultural heart of our communities since time immemorial and legal wins such as *Delgamuukw*, *Haida* and *Tsilhqot'in* decisions have created legal victories related to our Aboriginal Title and Rights;
- C. There are over 100 wildfires currently burning in British Columbia with approximately 20 First Nations affected, including 15 evacuated communities;
- D. First Nations in BC continue to be severely affected by wildfires and require immediate and on-going emergency management and financial support to ensure their safety, security and recovery;

D R A F T R E S O L U T I O N # 0 0 / 2 0 1 7

AFN Annual General Assembly, July 25-27, 2017, Regina, Saskatchewan

- E.** First Nations require greater financial resources and infrastructure to build capacity within their communities to assist in emergency and wildfire response;
- F.** A proactive and long-term supportive approach to wildfire management for First Nations communities is required to ensure the safety and security of citizens, infrastructure, and lands;
- G.** The Canadian Red Cross has been tasked with administering emergency relief funds to affected individuals and families;
- H.** Many affected First Nations have limited access to broadband internet, and telephone access/reception where existent, has been disrupted, causing significant communications challenges, and issues with receiving relief funds from the Canadian Red Cross;
- I.** Jurisdictional disputes between Provincial and Federal governments regarding their responsibility to deliver emergency services to First Nations continue to disrupt timely emergency relief operations;
- J.** Negative environmental processes associated with climate change are likely to further exacerbate similar wildfire crises on a yearly basis.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Chiefs-in-Assembly:

- 1.** Direct the National Chief and AFN Executive to call on the federal government to provide funding to First Nations communities in BC required to help mitigate climate change impacts and the destruction of First Nation environments, economies, and cultures.
- 2.** Direct the Assembly of First Nations to work with the Government of Canada to ensure supports and resources (financial and human) are made available to assist BC First Nations in fighting wildfires without delay including support for the development of community fire safety prevention and response programs;
- 3.** Request that the National Chief and BC Regional Chief advocate and insist that the federal and provincial governments:
 - a.** Establish an emergency endowment fund dedicated specifically to First Nations fire management and reclamation and recovery to support First Nations communities with future crises.
 - b.** Support the affected First Nations in British Columbia and their demands for reclamation compensation and recovery costs from the ongoing wildfire crisis, and that the compensation for all people impacted by wildfires, directly or indirectly, is sufficient to meet their needs and are efficient in the disbursement of funds.
 - c.** Immediately develop in consultation with First Nations a substantive emergency relief policy that protects First Nations from jurisdictional disputes between Provincial, Federal, and local governments when emergency services are in question.
- 4.** That the Federal and Provincial Governments repeal their laws denying us our forest management tool of our Rights to use fire to mitigate against fuel build, as a means towards forest rehabilitation, and furthermore that we be embedded in federal Firesmart program.