OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

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UNION OF B.C. INDIAN CHIEFS
CHIEFS COUNCIL
NOVEMBER 22ND – NOVEMBER 23RD, 2011
VANCOUVER, B.C.

Resolution no. 2011-52

RE: Support for BC Collaborative Watershed Governance Accord

WHEREAS a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from First Nations, First Nations organizations, and federal, provincial, and local governments was established to facilitate information sharing and dialogue that would contribute to a collaborative watershed governance document, to be signed and implemented by the parties represented on the Steering Committee;

WHEREAS the Steering Committee, coordinated by the Fraser Basin Council, met three times in 2010 and drafted a BC Collaborative Watershed Governance Accord which is intended to provide guidance by outlining a more collaborative and inclusive way of doing business in watersheds and to bring about more inclusive, broadly based decisions that are cognizant and respectful of competing interests;

WHEREAS the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* states:

> **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.
>
> **Article 32:**
>
> 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources;
> 2. States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources;
> 3. States shall provide effective mechanisms for just and fair redress for any such activities, and appropriate measures shall be taken to mitigate adverse environmental, economic, social, cultural or spiritual impact;

WHEREAS the purpose of the BC Collaborative Watershed Governance Accord is to encourage agencies, governments, including First Nations, organizations and commercial interests throughout BC to work more collaboratively within watersheds by implementing agreed-upon guiding principles to attain enduring healthy, resilient watersheds for the benefit of those ecosystems, communities and the resource economies that depend on them;

WHEREAS an early draft of the BC Collaborative Watershed Governance Accord was tabled as information at the March 2011 UBCIC Chiefs Council meeting and further revisions were subsequently made;

WHEREAS Resolution 2011-32 "Support for the BC Collaborative Watershed Governance Accord" was tabled at the September 2011 UBCIC Annual General Assembly for further revision, and was subsequently amended.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCIC Chiefs Council supports the attached and revised BC Collaborative Watershed Governance Accord as an interim step to First Nations implementing their own consultation and engagement processes, and with full recognition of each Nation's right to self-determination;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council directs the UBCIC Executive to sign the revised BC Collaborative Watershed Governance Accord on behalf of UBCIC, and circulate a final copy to the UBCIC Chiefs Council;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council calls on the Fraser Basin Council to ensure that the BC Collaborative Watershed Governance Accord is implemented in full accordance with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*;

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council calls on the Fraser Basin Council to provide regular updates to the UBCIC Chiefs Council on implementation of the *BC Collaborative Watershed Governance Accord*.

Moved: **Chief Dan Manuel, Upper Nicola Indian Band**
Seconded: **Lori Wilson, Penticton Indian Band (Proxy)**
Disposition: **Carried**
1 Abstention: Chief Byron Louis, Okanagan Indian Band
Date: **November 22, 2011**

A Collaborative Watershed Governance[1] Accord for BC

Purpose of the Accord

To encourage all orders of government (local, First Nations, provincial, and federal), organizations and commercial interests throughout BC, to work collaboratively to attain enduring healthy, resilient watersheds for the benefit of those ecosystems, communities, resource users and economies that depend on them.

The signatories of this Accord will:

1. *Encourage interests in watersheds throughout the province to adopt these principles;*
2. *Encourage participation of those active in watersheds to engage collaboratively in watershed planning processes;*
3. *Encourage implementation of measures in support of collaborative watershed planning and management; and*
4. *Apply lessons learned from other models of collaborative watershed governance.*

Guiding Principles of Collaborative Watershed Governance

The following inter-dependent principles will guide activities in watersheds:

1. Ecological, social, cultural and economic considerations are integral parts of decision making.

2. Best practices are to be employed to contribute to watershed sustainability[2] in new and existing obligations, jurisdictions and plans.

3. Effective collaborative watershed governance is to be carried out in a transparent, accountable and inclusive manner.

4. Effective working relationships are to be developed and maintained through open communication, trust and cooperation.

5. Decisions are to be based on the best available scientific information and First Nations traditional ecological knowledge, and with the goal of achieving watershed sustainability.

6. Authorizations to use water are to take into account the interests of present and future generations.

7. Effective watershed management is to be integrated with land-based resource objectives and activities on a watershed scale.

8. Watershed governance is to include shared responsibilities and enable those affected to have input to decision-making processes.

[1] "Collaborative watershed governance" refers to a coordinated and collaborative decision making process that involves all interests within a watershed.

2 "Watershed sustainability" refers to sustaining the natural attributes of watersheds for present and future generations.