

FOR RELEASE  
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## **Government of Canada, Yukon First Nations and Government of Yukon gather and reach agreement on a way forward for Yukon's environmental assessment legislation**

*Joint news release*

WHITEHORSE—The federal Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Carolyn Bennett, along with Yukon Premier Darrell Pasloski, Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) Grand Chief Ruth Massie and Chiefs of the 11 self-governing Yukon First Nations met today at the Intergovernmental Forum in Whitehorse to discuss common priorities and renew relationships built over more than 20 years of land claim and self-government implementation in Yukon. Today's Intergovernmental Forum is the first in nearly six years.

All parties are pleased to announce that one of the highlights of the forum was the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Canada, Yukon, the CYFN and self-governing Yukon First Nations that outlines mutually agreeable key steps towards addressing many of the First Nations' concerns regarding recent changes to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* (YESAA).

The Government of Canada will now work to repeal the four contentious amendments to the YESAA. Revised legislation will be drafted in collaboration with Yukon First Nations, the Government of Yukon and other key stakeholders.

This agreement demonstrates the commitment of all parties to work together to ensure that the legislation underpinning environmental assessment in Yukon is clear, fair and appropriate, and reflects the needs of everyone involved.

Other priorities discussed at the Intergovernmental Forum include a number of fiscal matters, an update on the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and an update on the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

### **Quick facts**

- Yukon is home to approximately half of all land claim and self-government agreements in Canada, with 11 of 14 First Nations having signed final land claim and self-government agreements with the Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon.
- Established in 2002, the Intergovernmental Forum provides an opportunity for Canada, Yukon and self-governing Yukon First Nations to address matters related to the implementation of land claim and self-government agreements discuss areas of mutual interest and advance intergovernmental relationships.
- The Government of Canada, Yukon First Nations, the Government of Yukon and other key stakeholders are already working collaboratively on draft YESAA legislation that repeals the four contentious amendments to the YESAA, with a view to introducing revised legislation in the House of Commons later this year.

### **Quotes**

"I am pleased to participate in my first Intergovernmental Forum. As Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, I am committed to renewing the relationship with Yukon First Nations and Yukon Government, and to ensuring that we have robust processes in place that protect Canada's rich natural environment, respect the rights and interests of Indigenous peoples, and support a resilient Canadian natural resources sector. Today's meeting of the Intergovernmental Forum, and the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding regarding YESAA, demonstrate the importance of moving forward with all of our partners in a renewed spirit of respect and cooperation to achieve our shared objectives."

*-The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, M.D., P.C., M.P., Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs*

"The Intergovernmental Forum is an opportunity for our governments to come together to identify common priorities and opportunities for collective action. Our shared priorities include advancing reconciliation, addressing the tragedy of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and implementing the Final and Self-Government Agreements. We know that we are stronger together, and that we must work in collaboration to achieve our goals."

*-Darrell Pasloski, Yukon premier*

"It has been six years since the Government of Canada, Yukon Government, and Yukon First Nations have come together at an Intergovernmental Forum. We look forward to working together as governments for the benefit of all Yukon citizens."

*-Ruth Massie, Grand Chief, Council of Yukon First Nations*

"We are pleased with the work of the Minister as promised on the repealing of the contentious provisions in Bill S-6. This is a first positive step in the renewing of the relationship between Yukon First Nations, Canada and Yukon; however, there is a lot of work left to be done. We look forward to working with the Premier and Minister to ensure the matter is dealt with in a positive manner."

*-Steve Smith, Chief, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations*

"Canada committed to work towards forging a new fiscal relationship with First Nations and we are holding them to their word."

*-Eric Fairclough, Chief, Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation*

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