



NEWS RELEASE

**BUSINESS LEADERS URGE GREAT CARE WITH RECOGNITION AND
RECONCILIATION ACT**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Prince Rupert, May 25, 2009 – An assembly of BC's business leaders from across the province voted Saturday in favour of a resolution urging the Provincial Government to proceed with caution and consideration when developing the proposed Recognition and Reconciliation Act.

Gathered in Prince Rupert for the 57th Annual General Meeting and Conference of the BC Chamber of Commerce, business delegates expressed their relief at the government's decision not to rush the legislation through prior to the May election, and echoed the government in pointing out that this legislation is too important to the future of British Columbia not to take the time required to ensure it is considered from all points of view.

"We'd like to be very clear on this," said John Winter, President and CEO of the BC Chamber of Commerce. "We think this legislation is an extremely important and essential step for the province in achieving reconciliation with the First Nations people of BC. However, this importance is all the more reason for a thorough consultation, and that is what we hope to see prior to this act being introduced. We have one chance to do this right."

The contents of the proposed Recognition and Reconciliation Act were released in an outline document entitled "Discussion Paper on Instructions for Implementing the New Relationship," in March, 2009. Although the document contained very little in the way of specifics, it included reference to dramatic changes including "shared decision-making" and the recognition by the government of aboriginal title throughout the province "without requirement of proof or strength of claim."

"Both government and the First Nations Leadership Council have cited this initiative as an improvement in certainty for business in the province," said Winter. "The Chamber, its membership, and business in general are certainly in favour of any attempts by government to bring increased levels of certainty to investments in the land base. It is our hope that with the use of an extensive consultation process the government will demonstrate how this improved certainty will be achieved, and that the resulting legislation will move our province forward to the satisfaction of all concerned parties."

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