

April 10, 2025. Kitselas Nation - Treaty Ratification Press Release

It was announced today that the members of the Kitselas First Nation voted in favor of, and have ratified, a formal Treaty with the Government of Canada, and the Government of British Columbia.

The draft Treaty was initialled with both levels of Government on June 24, 2024, after thirty-two (32) years in the making, spanning decades of negotiation and research. During the remainder of 2024, the Chief and Council of Kitselas and its Treaty team shared, explained, and consulted with their membership on the benefits of the proposed Treaty.

The Kitselas First Nation membership ratified the Treaty by 81.47% vote of eligible voters.

The Treaty includes terms such as the recognition of the Nations traditional territory, transfer of land back to the Nation, including resources such as forestry, mining rights, fisheries, and the right to legally manage and oversee these resources through a redefined governance structure that eliminates direct control by both the Federal and Provincial governments. It also provides for a cash settlement.

Previously, the Nation’s authority was recognized only through the Indian Act, as well as numerous regulatory authorities of the Province of British Columbia, a sore spot for the Kitselas people. Glenn Bennett, the elected Chief Councillor for the Nation said, *“This is a historic day in the history of our people. The years of work, dedication, effort, worry and wonder have now ended. We can rejoice in our independent status. We are no longer slave to rules and repression of the archaic and regressive Indian Act that has no place in a free and modern society. The relationship with both these levels of government was always stressed and tense. Today, we are free to, not only govern ourselves. but equally as important, we can grow our own private sector business and become an equal and contributing partner in the economy. We are very much looking forward to giving this crucial element prioritized attention.”*

The effective date for the Treaty is anticipated for 2028.

Media Inquiries contact:

Chief Councillor Glenn Bennett
Phone: 250-615-8704
Email: glenn.bennett@kitselas.com

