

Snuneymuxw First Nation



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

7, November, 2017, Nanaimo, BC/Snuneymuxw Territory: Snuneymuxw First Nation Rejects Status Quo Approach of Nanaimo Port Authority

Chief John Wesley and Councillor and Chief Negotiator Doug White III Kwulasultun of Snuneymuxw First Nation met with Ewan Moir, the new Nanaimo Port Authority CEO today. Snuneymuxw was disappointed in the meeting where no new approaches, shifts, or understandings about the Douglas Treaty or the relationship with Snuneymuxw were presented by the NPA CEO during the meeting.

During the course of the meeting:

- When asked directly whether or not he believed the constitutionally-entrenched treaty-protected rights of Snuneymuxw should be respected and recognized he said “There is no simple answer to that question”.
- When asked directly how he viewed the reality of Snuneymuxw treaty-rights shaping NPA decision-making, operations and practices, he stated that he believes “there should be no difference between any users or community partners and that Snuneymuxw should not be treated any differently from the people that live on Protection Island or other users.” (As a side note: Snuneymuxw has great respect for Protection Islanders)
- When asked directly how Snuneymuxw and Snuneymuxw treaty rights were dealt with in his interview and hiring process, he shared that “they did not come up at all” – that “the [NPA] board did not raise the issue at all.”
- Toward the end of the meeting, he shared that the NPA has been developing a major project proposal for a significant area of the Nanaimo Assembly Wharf lands for many months that had not been previously disclosed to Snuneymuxw and apologized for the fact that Snuneymuxw had not even been notified.

“We were shocked to hear that Snuneymuxw specific knowledge was not a part of the interview and hiring process for this important role. This is entirely out of line with Canada’s commitment to importance of nation to nation relations based on recognition of rights and true partnership. It is incomprehensible that a federal crown agency considers its relationship with SFN as an afterthought in the hiring process for their new CEO,” said Chief John Wesley.

“Our meeting today unfortunately confirmed that it is business as usual at the Nanaimo Port Authority. It is hard to believe that it is 2017 and we have a federal government that for the past two years has said that its most important relationship is with Indigenous peoples and that it must operate and function in recognition and respect of treaty rights and other Aboriginal rights – yet a crown agent is still acting in this manner. Minister Garneau and Transport Canada must urgently act to rectify this egregious situation. Snuneymuxw will be carrying on with its work with the Nanaimo Marina Association and the City of Nanaimo to develop an alternative to the NPA,” added Councillor Doug White.

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