

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

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UNION OF B.C. INDIAN CHIEFS
CHIEFS COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 24TH-25TH, 2021
VIRTUAL MEETING

Resolution no. 2021-27

RE: Improvements to CRAB Park to Address Environmental and Indigenous Concerns

WHEREAS Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh are the Title holders and Host Nations for the land that the City of Vancouver exists in;

WHEREAS CRAB Park, on unceded Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh territory, is a sacred site of great spiritual and cultural significance for Indigenous peoples that serves as a safe haven for those who are disproportionately impacted by homelessness and impoverishment, which is linked to the legacy of colonization, and is a site in which to grieve, process trauma, and remember the lives of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls from the Downtown Eastside that are commemorated by the Downtown Eastside Missing Women Memorial Stone in the park;

WHEREAS in July 2019, the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority (VFPA) announced that \$1 million would be going toward improvements to CRAB Park in order to offset the impacts of the Centerm Expansion Project, a \$454 million project to expand the Centerm container terminal, and the subsequent opportunity to improve CRAB Park represents an opportunity to address numerous and intersecting concerns and issues, including ecological and environmental considerations, the health of aquaculture, the right of Indigenous people to the conservation and protection of the environment, the right to safe and secure housing, and reconciliation;

WHEREAS the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualifications, and has, alongside the government of B.C., committed to implement, affirms that:

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 26(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired;

(2): Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources

2021-27

Page 1 of 3

that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired;

(3): States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.

Article 29(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination;

(2): States shall take effective measures to ensure that no storage or disposal of hazardous materials shall take place in the lands or territories of indigenous peoples without their free, prior and informed consent;

WHEREAS despite vocal opposition from First Nations leaders, Nations, and peoples to the construction of the pipeline, as well as their commitment to reconciliation, Canada is continuing the construction of the Trans Mountain Expansion (TMX) project which would drastically increase the oil barge tankers in the Burrard Inlet and subsequently increase the risk of oil spills and ecological devastation;

WHEREAS the containers and tankers present in Lot 5 of CRAB Park present ecological risks, including the risk of an oil spill that could devastate the freshwater marsh at CRAB Park that is one of the few freshwater sources for birds on the south side of the Burrard Inlet, as well as endanger the health of people in the community;

WHEREAS parks such as CRAB Park are crucial for homeless populations, particularly as the current COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated housing and employment challenges; however, the June 16th 2020 raid at Namegan /CRAB Park Tent City in which the police forcibly displaced and removed homeless people from their shelters and arrested 46 people, is a continuation of the Province and the City of Vancouver prioritizing corporate interests and colonial property over the lives and safety of unhoused community members, which is especially damaging in the face of the dual health crisis peoples in the DTES are disproportionately at risk of – the COVID-19 pandemic and the opioid crisis;

WHEREAS the need for an Indigenous healing lodge has been brought forward by a number of groups and peoples, including the CRAB Water for Life Society, the Western Aboriginal Harm Reduction Society founders in 2000, and Indigenous members of the city's Local Area Planning Committee;

WHEREAS Vancouver Park Board commissioners unanimously approved a motion from John Irwin that will ask the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority to invest in CRAB park in light of the impending expansion of the neighboring Centerm container terminal, which would include establishing a healing centre and improving access, especially for people with mobility issues; and

WHEREAS the Vancouver City Council approved recommendations for staff to continue to work with community, health sector, foundation and government partners to plan for the development and operation of an Indigenous Healing and Wellness Centre in the Downtown Eastside.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council directs the UBCIC Executive and staff to work with local Host Nations, likeminded organizations and peoples to coordinate and advance improvements to CRAB park that align with Indigenous concerns and priorities and address pressing environmental concerns;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council directs the UBCIC Executive to call upon the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Park Board and the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority to work with local Host Nations and Indigenous organizations to establish an Indigenous healing lodge at CRAB park; and

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council calls upon the Vancouver Port Authority to immediately remove the containers and tankers in Lot 5.

Moved: Cora Anthony, Neskonalith Indian Band (Proxy)

Seconded: Chief Don Tom, Tsartlip First Nation

Disposition: Carried

1 Abstention: Spokesperson & Councillor Khelsilem (Dustin Rivers), Squamish Nation

Date: February 25, 2021