

BULLETIN

An historic moment: BC to become first Canadian province to legislate UNDRIP

October 25, 2019

This morning the BC government introduced Bill 41, the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

This bill requires all provincial laws to align with UNDRIP, and is an important and concrete step to implementing the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) into a provincial legislative framework. Once passed, BC will be the first province to bring the internationally recognized standards of UNDRIP into provincial law.

“Today is a meaningful day in a long process towards reconciliation,” said HSA President Val Avery. Indigenous peoples across Canada have worked tirelessly to have their basic rights recognized, and today the province has stood up and said that they will make this commitment. After 160 years of broken promises, a pathway is being established for meaningful partnership.”

“While there is still a lot of work to be done, Bill 41 sets parameters for Indigenous people to take part in decision-making. It moves us closer to where the province should be,” she said.

The government says that it is working in partnership with BC’s Indigenous peoples to develop an action plan and identify which laws should be changed first. This bill has been jointly developed with the three organizations comprising the First Nations Leadership Council: the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, First Nations Summit and BC Assembly of First Nations, and is doing what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action expressly said all governments should do: adopt and implement UNDRIP as a framework for reconciliation.

This legislation recognizes that Indigenous rights are human rights. It mandates an action plan and a reporting and accountability mechanism, supports self-determination and self-government, and creates space for new forms of decision-making that recognize First Nations’ jurisdiction.

This is an important step forward to true and lasting reconciliation. Of course, this work will not happen overnight, but this legislation lays a critical foundation for jointly shared social and economic progress.

The UN General Assembly adopted UNDRIP in 2007. In 2016, nearly a decade later, Canada removed its objector status to UNDRIP. However, the document is not legally binding and thus Bill 41 marks a major step forward in realizing Indigenous rights in BC.

For more information on this landmark legislation:

There was a moving ceremony in the legislature this morning with the introduction of this bill. You can watch the event on the government website [here](#).

The government press release can be read [here](#).

The government has also produced a fact sheet for this legislation. Read it [here](#).

A full webpage with information and a Q&A about the legislation [here](#).

Many groups have quickly come out in strong support of this bill, including the BC Federation of Labour. You can read the BCFED press release [here](#).



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