

Cabinet Decision Document

“CONFIDENTIAL - CABINET DOCUMENT”
Ministry Document Number: 3687359

MINISTER:

Geoff Plant, Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Treaty Negotiations

TITLE:

Lheidli T’enneh Agreement-In-Principle

DECISION REQUESTED:

1. Approval of the Agreement-in-Principle
2. Approval to proceed with Final Agreement negotiations.

BACKGROUND:

Chief Negotiators for all three Parties have recommended approval of the Agreement-in-Principle.

The agreement has been negotiated within the mandate provided to the Treaty Negotiations Office (TNO) by Cabinet. Conclusion of the agreement supports the New Era commitment to “fast-track treaty talks, to conclude fair treaty settlements”, and the Ministry’s Service Plan. The proposed Agreement-in-Principle is consistent with the referendum on treaty principles. A map of the proposed treaty lands is attached as Appendix A, a summary of the agreement is set out in Appendix B, and a review of the treaty principles and the Lheidli T’enneh Agreement-in-Principle is included in Appendix C.

A communications plan has been approved by the Parties. Communications activities have recently included public information meetings in Prince George and McBride in the first week of June to review the AIP. There have also been information meetings with groups in the Prince George area representing sectoral interests and with the Prince George Treaty Advisory Committee. The AIP and a summary of it have been posted since the first week of May, 2003 on the British Columbia Treaty Commission website (www.bctreaty.net). The Treaty Negotiations Office website (www.gov.bc.ca/tno) has also contained summary information and a link to the AIP. In addition, other written material, such as fact sheets and brochures, have been distributed and made available to the public.

The Lheidli T’enneh Band has reviewed the agreement with its community and the Community Treaty Council (CTC) which is a representative community body. The CTC has since voted to recommend the agreement be approved by the Band Chief and Council. Accordingly, the Chief and Council have approved the Agreement-in-Principle. The next steps in the agreement’s approval process involve approval by British Columbia and Canada.

The Agreement-in-Principle with Lheidli T'enneh will provide the basis for achieving certainty on land and resources and for securing key provincial interests in the Prince George region. It will also demonstrate that the treaty process is working.

The Lheidli T'enneh Agreement-in-Principle will form the basis for negotiating the Final Agreement and the Governance Agreement which will not be part of the treaty. The Parties must negotiate detailed legal text on the Agreement-in-Principle understandings and associated agreements on subjects such as tax, fiscal financing, fish, implementation and revenue sharing.

The agreement provides for the negotiation of revenue-sharing prior to a Final Agreement and provincial negotiators will ensure that any agreement on revenue-sharing will be within the financial mandate approved by Cabinet. TNO will provide an accounting of all Final Agreement costs to Treasury Board and Cabinet.

TNO is seeking approval to sign the Agreement-in-Principle and to proceed with Final Agreement negotiations.

RECOMMENDED DECISION:

- 1. Approval of the Agreement-in-Principle; and**
- 2. Approval to proceed with Final Agreement negotiations.**

SIGNATURE:

Honourable Geoff Plant
Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Treaty Negotiations

KEY CONTACT: Robin Junger, Chief Negotiator, 356-0224