

Media Release

For Immediate Release

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The CRD, Tsartlip and Tseycum First Nations sign Memorandum of Understanding

Victoria, BC- Capital Regional District (CRD), **WJŌŁŁŁP** (Tsartlip), and **WSIKEM** (Tseycum) First Nations, through the **WSÁNEĆ** Leadership Council (WLC), are pleased to announce they have signed a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) formalizing their government-to-government relationship.

The CRD operates on the Territory of the **WSÁNEĆ** people, who have stewarded these lands and seawaters since time immemorial. By providing this mechanism to include **WJŌŁŁŁP** and **WSIKEM** priorities, and First Nations knowledge into CRD initiatives, this collaboration will help foster a more inclusive approach to regional government.

“The time has come for local governments to play a significant role in the work of reconciliation. The **WSÁNEĆ** Leadership Council, on behalf of **WJŌŁŁŁP** and **WSIKEM**, is working directly with the CRD, not because we want to become like municipalities or regional districts, but because local government authorities make decisions over **WSÁNEĆ** Territory, which our people have a responsibility to protect. This responsibility stems from **WSÁNEĆ** ancient laws, created by **XÁLS**, the Creator. These laws and orders have survived colonization. I strongly encourage the CRD to advance the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and respect **WSÁNEĆ** Douglas Treaty Rights. This MOU will aid the CRD in doing just that, and in advancing initiatives that will benefit both **WSÁNEĆ** and the general public.” said Chief Don Tom, Tsartlip First Nation, and Chair of the WLC Board.

“**WSÁNEĆ** are a strong people, with unique culture, language, and traditional practices. We must continue to work based upon the guidance of our Elders, so that our children have a future to look forward to on their own Territory.” said Chief Tanya Jimmy, Tseycum First Nation.

CRD and WLC staff will hold regular meetings to ensure ongoing communication and implementation of a shared workplan to address priority topics identified in the MOU. Additionally, annual government-to-government meetings will be held between leadership and elected representatives. These regular points

of connection foster stronger relationships and provide tangible, on-the-ground benefits by facilitating direct dialogue and immediate problem-solving.

"The signing of this MOU represents a mutual recognition of the importance of cooperation. By working together, we can address shared challenges and create opportunities that benefit all members of our communities," said CRD Board Chair, Cliff McNeil-Smith. "This agreement reflects our commitment to fostering a mutually respectful relationship and advancing reconciliation. I look forward to working together to achieve our common goals and enhance the well-being of the region."

By outlining principles for working together, this MOU will directly support the creation of new processes for respectful and reciprocal government-to-government decision-making.

The MOU sets out priority topics for collaboration, including:

- Governance
- Economic & Employment Opportunities
- Protection of Ancestral Sites
- Solid Waste Management
- Regional Parks
- Electoral Area Community Parks
- Environmental Protection
- Land Acquisition
- Art, Place Names & Public Education
- Harvesting Opportunities
- Cultural Learning Opportunities for CRD Board & Staff
- Any other topics identified and agreed to by the Parties.

The MOU aims to foster a stronger partnership, enhance communication, and promote a deeper understanding and respect for each other's governance structures and cultural values.



Caption: MOU Signing Ceremony. Pictured left to right: CRD Board Chair, Cliff McNell-Smith; Chief Tanya Jimmy, Tseycum First Nation; Chief Don Tom, Tsartlip First Nation.

The CRD delivers regional, sub-regional and local services to 13 municipalities and three electoral areas on southern Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. Governed by a 24-member Board of Directors, the CRD works collaboratively with First Nations and government partners to enable sustainable growth, foster community well-being, and develop cost-effective infrastructure while continuing to provide core services to residents throughout the region. Visit us online at www.crd.ca.

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