



Good morning and Boozhoo to all,

I would like to have been with you today as you gather on the traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations to attend this one of a kind conference.

The First Nations Safety Council of British Columbia is a wonderful example of what can be done when we bridge the gap between traditional knowledge and industry's best practices. I am encouraged that there is an organization that has been established by, for and to serve First Nations individuals, communities and enterprises in achieving the highest standard of occupational health, safety and environmental management.

Although none of the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) report touch directly on health and safety regulation, the calls provide a roadmap that that can be used by anyone wanting to reconciliation efforts to improve the relationship with Indigenous Peoples.

The TRC Call to Action # 92 is closely linked with mission statement of the First Nations Safety Council of British Columbia. It states:

*We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their land and resources.*

- i. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.*
- ii. Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.*
- iii. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.*

It is within this framework that I see the sheer existence of the First National Safety Council of British Columbia as an act of reconciliation in and of itself. The council has been

entrusted with ensuring that any company operating on First Nation's land have proper functioning safety programs and policies that meet and exceed regulatory requirements. The emphasis on preserving and promoting traditional knowledge can help bridge the differences in equitable access to education and training to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment for all.

I applaud the work of the council and look forward to following the progress and hopefully the expansion of similar organizations within the other provinces.

Thank you, miigwetch,



Senator Murray Sinclair  
Independent Senator  
Manitoba